WESLEY'S VETERANS

VOLUME 6

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EDITED BY
REV. JOHN TELFORD, B A.

WESLEY'S VETERANS

STEVE McCormick

WESLEY'S VETERANS

LIVES OF
EARLY METHODIST PREACHERS
TOLD BY THEMSELVES

VOL. VI

JOHN VALTON
THOMAS RANKIN
JOHN PRITCHARD
JASPER ROBINSON
THOMAS TENNANT
JOHN ALLEN

With Additions and Annotations

BY REV. JOHN TELFORD, B.A.

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NOTE

WESLEY writes to Valton, June 18, 1782 (*Works* xiii. 164), 'I have received the first two sheets of your Life. Be not afraid of writing too much; I can easily leave out what can be spared. It pleased God to lead John Haime and you a long way through the wilderness. Others He leads through a shorter and smoother way; and yet to the same point. You should take care never to write long at a time, and always to write standing; never on any account leaning on your stomach.'

The Autobiography, which he began on January 3, 1782, appeared in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1784, and was edited with many additions and letters by Joseph Sutcliffe, A.M., in 1830. Mr. Sutcliffe's additions to the narrative are placed in brackets; other additions by Valton now made in brackets are distinguished by *MS.* placed at end of the paragraph.

Valton's MS. Journal is one of the treasures of Mr. George Stampe, and some extracts from it are given in the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, vol. viii.

WESLEY'S VETERANS

Vol. VI

JOHN VALTON

Prior to his entrance on the ministry, Mr. Valton wrote his experience, in six volumes; but very much diminished his Journal amid the laborious avocations of a Methodist preacher. He gives a synopsis of his labours and experience in a seventh volume. He left an additional MS., containing an account of his life and labours for the last ten years. His autobiography commences by a letter to Mr. Wesley:

'Rev. and dear Sir,

'I have long resisted your importunate desire to give you a short account of my experience, being desirous to conceal my insignificant life till I was no longer interested in the honour or dishonour that cometh of man. But your last letter on the subject, connected with the same opinion of Mr. Fletcher, has at length convinced me that I owe it to God and His church. I therefore humbly submit an extract to the perusal of candid people, imploring the benediction of God to accompany it.'

My parents were natives of France, and of the Roman Catholic communion. They came to

London in the year 1738, two years before I was born;[1] so that it was my providential lot to be born and brought up in England. I was first put to a day-school to learn English; and then removed to the school of a priest, where a French woman was employed to teach that language. During my early years I was trained to a regular attendance at the Romish chapels in London, as were also my brother and sister.

When I was nine years old my mother took me over to Boulogne, in France, and placed me under an abbot, who had a few boarders; giving him a particular charge to perfect me in the French language. The abbot used to say mass two or three times a week at an adjacent chapel, and to employ two of his pupils to assist at the altar. In a while I was allowed to participate of that honour, and was not a little proud to wear a surplice. In this school I remained six months, bowing to images of wood, and stone, and wax, and imbibing the baneful potions of idolatry and superstition. My mother, now coming over, took me with her from Boulogne to Paris; and being once in the Church of Notre Dame, I was so delighted to hear the little choristers chant and sing that I used my earnest endeavours with my mother to procure me a place among them; and she seemed willing to comply, but had no friend in the place to procure me the situation.

[1] In the sixth volume of his Experience he names his birthday, November 23, 1740. He was baptized John Francis, but never used the second name. Mr. Valton told Mrs. Rooke, of Midsomer Norton, that his father came to England as page in the suite of George the Second.

As the priest with whom I had been entrusted rigorously observed all the fast-days of the saints, which half-starved the boys, I shrunk at the idea of returning, and prayed my mother to have me removed. She complied, and endeavoured to place me in a convent of Jesuits. Not, however, agreeing on the terms, I was placed for three months longer at a private school, while she went to visit her friends in France. Here I can once remember with pain and praise making auricular confession, and receiving the absolution and benediction of my confessor. What a mercy that all this had not irrevocably grounded me in the errors and principles of the Romish Church, and indelibly stamped me a Papist ! But God had determined otherwise, as the sequel will show.

My mother now brought me home to London, where having been for three months, my father was persuaded to place me at a grammar-school in Yorkshire, to perfect me in the rudiments of the Latin tongue. The clergyman who was head of the school, not knowing that I had been rigorously educated a Roman Catholic, sent me to church with his own sons. And I have often marvelled that I should so readily comply. However, I can well remember that serious impressions were made very early on my mind ; but I had no one to guide me in the way that I should go.

When about thirteen years of age the Bishop of Chester came, and confirmed between two and three hundred young persons. I attended with these, and the bishop laid his hand on my head ; but the next day my conscience sorely reproached

me, and I thought I should be damned for what I had done, having been baptized a Papist. I was sorely troubled for a time ; but it wore away.

In my fifteenth year I happened to meet with Hervey's *Meditations ;* and cast my eye on that part which treats of the resurrection of the dead. I was now sensibly affected, and resolved to amend my life, and to pray that the resurrection might be a welcome day to me. For several days I had a deep impression on my mind, and was careful not to offend God ; but, alas ! this also was soon effaced.

At seventeen years of age I returned to London, and was placed in an academy to learn book-keeping. While here I was appointed a clerk in the Office of Ordnance, and sent to Portsmouth ; where God, in the midst of temptations, was pleased to restrain me in an extraordinary manner.

While here a carpenter often came to heat his glue-pot at the office-fire. He being a Methodist, the clerks used to surround the fire, to have a little diversion with him. They would say, 'Well, John, is there yet any hope for us? Shall we all be damned?' This would sometimes bring on serious discourse ; but we, like the swine, trampled the pearls under our feet. He one day said, when I was out of the office, that he had some hopes of John : but though I then laughed at his words, I have since found that the bread cast on the water was found after many days.

After residing for two years in Portsmouth I was removed to Greenwich, still ignorant of the

things which belonged to my peace. But I had not been there long before I was ordered to embark with the army for Portugal, as clerk of the stores, and assistant to the pay-master of the artillery. Though a high martial spirit had made me a volunteer in embarkation, many fears soon assailed me, lest I should perish at sea or fall in battle, and my soul became a prey to the worm that never dies. What a pity that the good impressions on the minds of youth should be hid so much from the eyes of the Church, and escape her fostering care!

After being in Portugal for nine months, peace being restored, the army was ordered home. During my stay in that country I became intimate with some of the priests; and having a passion for splendour, the decorations of their churches, and the brilliant dresses of their images, occasioned my frequent visits; yet the issues were that I felt no sorrow for having escaped the 'mother of harlots.'

On my return to England a desk was again assigned me at Greenwich. I had not been here long before a sore trial made me think of God, and drove me to prayer for some days. In these exercises I found happiness, and a prospect of heaven, to which I thought I was then hastening. —[This is understood to have been a love affair, which greatly affected his health, and laid the foundation of that nervous complaint which more or less followed him to the grave.]—At this time Mr. Romaine's *Sermon on the Dry Bones* providentially fell into my hands. It seemed fraught with impossibilities that I should live

conformably to what was there required, being surrounded with gay companions; and the odious epithet of Methodist was so revolting that my Babel religion soon fell to the ground. In short, by associating with the officers of the army, I had contracted a habit of swearing, and indeed most other vices of the army, and was become quite a libertine. For swearing I was often reproved by my friends, which happily operated in the issue in a total renunciation of that vice.

Providence, whose designations are always gracious, now interfered to remove me from a dangerous group of companions. In December, 1763, I was ordered to the king's magazines at Purfleet, to do duty there. This seemed cruel, that I, who was but just returned from foreign service, during the campaign in Portugal, should be ordered to this isolated station, while two younger clerks were allowed to stay! When I arrived, I expected to meet with a kind reception from the young engineers; in which, however, I was disappointed; and remained for some time almost a solitary stranger.

[Mrs. Weaver, mother of the venerable Mr. Weaver, clerk in the king's works at Woolwich, and local preacher, was then living at Purfleet. She told me that Mr. Valton came there quite a gay and pleasant young gentleman; and as he excelled on the violin, they rented a room, where he played in the evenings, and the young people danced. But, she added, when he turned Methodist, we turned Methodists; and the room, which had been shut up for some time, was re-

opened for prayer and reading. In a while he procured Mr. Wesley's *Sacred Harmony*, and began to use the fiddle again in teaching us these new and engaging tunes.]

There was at Purfleet a lady of the name of Edwards, whose husband was an officer in the king's service. Soon after my arrival, they invited me to dine, and treated me with many civilities. Mrs. E. was a member of Mr. Wesley's society in London, and the only Methodist in that part of the country. I often spent a leisure hour at their house. One evening the conversation turned on religion. I threw in my mite, probably more from complaisance than inclination: it made, however, a strong impression on her mind in my favour. This conversation became, what God willed it to be, less tiresome to me in some succeeding evenings, and I went so far as to join the family in singing hymns. This pious woman, persevering in her good designs, lent me Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, Rutherford's *Letters*, and Law's *Serious Call*. By her conversation, and by the reading of these books, I began to see my soul as the moth fluttering about the flame. Fear now prompted me to pray, sometimes with and sometimes without a form. I left off my grosser sins, and sacrificed my accustomed amusements, as a sort of atonement for my past transgressions. To these some little charities were added, and acts of self-denial; which I considered as highly meritorious, and as tending gradually to blot out the handwriting which stood against me in the book of God.

But, here again, this good woman, whom I may call my soul's friend, beat me with much difficulty out of these Papistical notions, which still floated in my mind, and convinced me that nothing would avail without faith in Christ; and that salvation was the free, unmerited gift of God, through the redemption that is in Him. The books I was then reading confirmed all she said, and shone with increasing light on my beclouded mind.

I was now sorely embarrassed with notions in my head, conflicting with sins in my heart. I knew not what to do. In fact, I began to despair of salvation, and thought to recede; but this I could not well do, having, as it were, by the kindness of this family, taken the bounty-money, if I may use a military term; and to retreat now would be shameful. I could not pray with devotion; my addresses to the throne of grace were irregular and dissipated, and prayer seemed a burden. At length, encouraged by my friends, I unbosomed my whole heart to Mr. Wesley, in an anonymous letter, soliciting his advice. The answer I beg leave to transcribe for the benefit of those who may be in the same state.

'LONDON, *January* 31, 1764.

'IT is certainly right with all possible care to abstain from all outward evil. But this profits only a little. The inward change is the one thing needful for *you*. You must be born again, or you never will gain a uniform and lasting liberty. Your whole soul is diseased, or rather dead—

dead to God, dead in sin. Awake, then, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. To seek for a particular deliverance from one sin only is mere labour lost. If it could be attained, it would be little worth; for another would arise in its place. But, indeed, it cannot, before there is a general deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. This is the thing which you want, and which you should be continually seeking for. You want to be justified freely from all things, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ. It might be of use if you should read over the first volume of [my] sermons seriously, and with prayer. Indeed, nothing will avail without prayer. Pray, whether you can or not. When you are cheerful, and when you are heavy, still pray. Pray with many or with few words, or with none at all: you will surely find an answer of peace, and why not now? I am

'Your servant, for Christ's sake,

'J. WESLEY.'

This letter seemed fraught with impossibilities, and I should have misconstrued the whole had not Mrs. E. explained it, and very much to my satisfaction. I now determined fully to enter into the service of the Lord of Hosts, and to seek the deliverance described in the letter. I saw now the gracious hand of God in removing me from Greenwich, and in my being unnoticed by the officers when I came to Purfleet; for had I contracted an intimacy with them, all this good

might have been frustrated. Nearly at the same time a little child, about seven years of age, came to drink tea with me: I happened to call her a little angel, and she rejoined, 'O, sir, I dreamed last night that you was an angel, and that I saw you flying up into heaven, and that I called after you, but you would not stop for me; and I asked my father's leave to come and take tea with you, that I might tell you my dream.' This little incident gave me, for a day or two, great comfort; because I received it as a token from God of what He was about to do for my soul, by fitting and preparing me for a better world; for since my trial and affliction at Greenwich, I had ceased to wish for length of life.

But all this was transient. Satan now began to assault me with scepticism in its most dreadful forms—that there was no God, else He would hear my prayers. I was tempted also to disbelieve the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures and almost every doctrine of revelation. In short, I quarrelled with every book I read, as dark, mysterious, and irrelevant to my case.

March 6, 1764.—I was to-day very unhappy, and thought that God had abandoned me. I sought for a form of prayer, but could find none that suited me. At last I drew up a form, partly out of the Prayer-Book, and partly out of Dr. Horneck's *Happy Ascetic*, which I used for a few days; and then laid it aside, as not uttering the language of my heart. I now prayed, sometimes with words, and sometimes with none. But

when I could utter a few words, I had sometimes a gleam of hope from an overclouded sun.

In the evening a religious young man came to spend an hour at Mr. Edwards's, and I was invited to meet him. He related his experience, which very much agreed with mine, while groping the way to peace of conscience, as it were, over a dark mountain. We spent the evening in very profitable conversation, and closed with singing and prayer. I never, in all my life, enjoyed such happiness as this evening afforded me. I came home, and offered up my addresses to Heaven with an unusual flow of words. My prayers were interrupted only with tears, the effect of heartfelt joy. I could have spent the whole night in praising God: my pillow was easy, and when I awoke in the morning I arose and prostrated myself before the God that never sleeps.

11*th.*—This day being the Sabbath, I attended the morning service at church; and prayed very earnestly to God. In the afternoon I spent some time with Mr. Cawley, a carpenter, who had come from London, partly with a view to inquire after the welfare of my soul. Before I had been half an hour in his company I loved the man, and became united to him in spirit. Alexander the Great once told Diogenes that if he were not Alexander the Great he would desire to be Diogenes. But I could have said, I would rather be Mr. Cawley than Diogenes. We closed the interview with singing and prayer. Yet neither singing nor praying has any lasting effect to raise my mind. I ever sink back into that

nervous gloom to which my constitution is inclined. My petrified heart seems unwilling that a tear should drop from my eye. Nay, such was the apathy I now felt, that had my relations been bleeding at my feet, I think it would not have moved me. I sometimes thought that God had entirely given me up.

On relating my feelings to my good mother, I observed that she shed tears. She assured me that I should soon receive comfort, notwithstanding the agonies of my mind. She encouraged me to look to the Saviour, adding that 'the vilest sinner should never despair.' These last words reached my heart, and caused the tears plentifully to flow from my eyes. My heart swelled, and my eyes so overflowed, that I left the house; a spark of celestial fire now kindled in my breast, which dispelled the gloom, melted the rock, and diffused divine love through all my heart. My soul exclaimed, 'What acknowledgements shall I make to Thee, O Fountain of divine love, for Thy goodness to a worm! How incomprehensible is Thy love to sinners, and how ready art Thou to forgive, and to meet them when they return! How inexcusable am I to distrust Thy goodness, seeing every object around me proclaims Thy goodness and love!'

In the afternoon of this blessed day I found the river of joy swelling in my breast by the influence of the heavenly shower. The Sun of Righteousness has indeed risen on my soul with genial warmth, and called forth the enlivened seeds of gratitude. I was not disobedient to the heavenly

influences, but instantly on my knees acknowledged the blessing, and prayed that the Lord would no more hide His face from me, but pardon my impatience, my pride, and unbelief. I could now bless God for the hidings of His face for my peevishness and distrustful reasonings; for I found that without His gracious restriction I should sink back into all the bad habits of my fellow sinners.

In prayer also I found that God had now loosened my tongue: I could pour out my soul, and speak as the Spirit gave me utterance. I could now pray that the Lord would grant me such of my petitions as tended to the welfare of my soul, and at such times as He saw best.

21*st*.—My soul for the last three days has been gradually sinking; but to-day the strong man rose upon me with uncommon violence. I discovered anew the latent evils of my breast. I felt pride, repining, and discontent. Ah! how is it that I, who but the other day had such overflowing peace and joy, should now sink so low!—'Ah! little did I think,' exclaimed I, in my anguish, 'that religion would bring me to this! Surely I never found evil passions so predominant in my career of worldly pleasure. Well, I shall now lay religion aside!' These were my words. But I reflected that I never found any real pleasure or lasting good in the world; and to return to it would be but to increase my misery in this world, and endless torments in that which is to come. A faint hope now shone upon me that faith and hope would yet again spring up in my mind.

While in this weak and depressed state, I was asserting something of importance, which was disbelieved by the person to whom I spoke: I felt great anger—*et ira est furor*—and called God twice or thrice to witness the truth of what I said, and, in the agony of my mind, silently vowed to abandon religion. Oh, how I was stung with my own words! I was like a madman. I dropped on my knees to pray; but could not. I fell prostrate, but could not remain so; fearing lest God should strike me dead, and send me to everlasting fire. I could scarcely stand all the day, I was so greatly affected. I could but remark the difference in my feelings between this and the former conflict, after offending God. Then I was all apathy; nothing moved me: now everything heaped a mountain on my depressed spirits. I wished to hide myself in some dark retreat, being burdened with the light of the sun. At night I ventured to pray, but without much hope. In the morning I was much the same. However, about eleven o'clock the Lord gave me a token of His love and goodness in my heart. I exclaimed, 'O God, let me never more offend Thee by anger, nor despair of Thy mercy and love; but be always resigned to Thy gracious will!'

April 6.—I went to London, and called on a gentleman, to whom I had once written on business, to direct me to hear a sermon. While I was there, Mr. Mark Davis (then stationed in town) came in, and I accompanied him to Wapping, and told him all my heart and state. I hid myself

in this small and rough-looking chapel[1] under the pulpit; and though much annoyed with the people's coughing and noise, yet I was delighted with the discourse on 'Quench not the Spirit.' It seemed to be wholly on my account. How happy are the Methodists who have ministers that know how to speak a word to him that is weary!

Sunday, 8.—I attended at West Street, Seven Dials. The great decorum and strict attention of the congregation inspired me with reverence and awe. The unaffected piety, the correct, uniform, and decent responses of the people, were very moving, and I may say to me, as a stranger, astonishing. The singing was heavenly, and seemed to come from the heart. In the evening I attended at the Foundery (Mr. Wesley's first chapel), and heard an excellent sermon, which stirred me up to press towards the mark for the prize of my high calling; and should have found more good if I could have retired for prayer; but, lodging with a great family, I had no opportunity. How favoured are the Methodists to enjoy such ordinances and sermons as these! And yet my heart, my vain heart, is afraid to have it known that I am become a Methodist.

22nd.—To-day I went to Snow's Fields Chapel to hear Mr. Maxfield, and stayed the sacrament, but found the enemy so harassing my mind with temptations, that the reasonings with him took away much of the good. The sermon, however, was very affecting, and kept me in tears most of

[1] Probably the old French church in Great Hermitage Street.

the time. Surely these are workmen who know their work, and know the hearts of men!

30*th*.—Though I have been in a good frame of mind the last few days, I now found a return of old temptations. It has been my method at those times to fall down on my knees and pray; that being the most advantageous posture in which to resist the enemy.

May 3.—To-day, Mrs. Edwards being sick, the severest trial of all my life came upon me; I was forbidden to go to the house of my soul's friend, the blessed mother in Israel who, under God, had been the instrument of saving my soul. The enemy, for some weeks, had been stirring up the mind of Mr. E. against me. He was determined to prohibit my access to his house, and had for some weeks been secretly and openly defaming me; and in such sort that the gentlemen in the king's service despised me. Among the rest, he accused me of insanity, and thought that my religious conversation and prayers contributed to augment the rheumatic fever and affliction of his wife. 'They laid things to my charge that I knew not of.'

I went to my room full of anguish, and of the most horrible temptations. I spent the whole night in prayer, sometimes on the floor, sometimes on the bed. The reproaches of the ungodly brought all my sins to my remembrance, and seemed to overwhelm me with a sense of the wrath of God. While in prayer, the Almighty seemed clothed with angry aspects, and with thunder in His hand. Meanwhile the Saviour presented

Himself in His priestly garments, interceding for my soul. For a time the Almighty seemed inexorable, but at length dropped His vengeful arm, as though He had said,

> My Son is in My servant's prayer,
> And Jesus forces me to spare.

This view of God and the mediatorial throne continued with me for several days, and was followed with much peace.

4*th*.—This day, by acute pains, Mrs. Edwards became delirious. The gout having reached her stomach, she was not expected to live; and I believe her affliction was much augmented by the grief of her mind. My prayer was that God would not separate us, but cut short His work in me, and take me to the realms of bliss, whither I thought she was going. About ten o'clock I retired, and wrestled with the Lord that He would ease her pain, and remove her delirium: and it pleased the Almighty that very hour to grant what I asked; which greatly increased my faith, and strengthened my hands in prayer. From this time also, Mr. E. seemed reconciled to me. Perhaps it was the affliction of his wife which made him so angry with me; but, Lord, what is man?

10*th*.—To-day I also was taken ill, and feared lest I should lose my senses. Great trials always augment the infirmities to which my constitution is inclined. I spent most of the morning in prayer and in much distress of mind. A plot had been laid to get me removed back to Greenwich, among all my old and wicked companions.

Providentially I was enabled so to remonstrate as to break the snare. I have, in this instance, realized the note of Mr. Wesley, Matt. iv. 1; that after the strongest consolations we may expect the sharpest temptations.

15*th*.—This being the Sabbath day, I met Mr. Watkins at the church door, an officer who had served with me in Portugal. I was ashamed to say that I had turned Methodist; and yet I durst not let him go without telling him of the danger his soul was in. The ship was lying off Purfleet, in which he was going out to Peniscola. I took him to dine. Our conversation soon made him ready to exclaim, with the jailer, 'What must I do to be saved?' We wept and prayed together, and sung hymns. He told me that he had a strong conflict, as the ship was to sail that evening, whether he should venture ashore to take leave of me; but something unaccountably said within him, 'I must see him; I must see him.' I gave him all Mr. Wesley's Sermons and Notes, and other books that I had, accompanied him about a mile, and was fully persuaded that God, who had begun a good work in his soul, would finish it to the day of Christ. My soul was knit to him in affection, as the soul of David to Jonathan. After parting from him, I cried, 'O Lord, the Keeper of Israel, into Thy hands I commend him. Save and defend him, that he may renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and be a true follower of the Lamb!' From this time, I felt an unaccountable desire for the salvation of souls, and resolved to speak to individuals whenever

I could find opportunity. A little fruit encourages the labours of the husbandman.

July 14.—I went to London to hear Mr. Charles Wesley on the ensuing Sabbath. His word was with power; and I thought my Saviour was at hand, never being so sensibly affected under a discourse before. In the evening I heard him again at the Foundery, and all seemed to be comforted or affected by his word. On returning, I lost much of the good by joining rather than reproving the discourse of the passengers. My conscience severely accuses if I join in any unhallowed levity of conversation. Surely my heart is a composition of sin, at enmity with God, and subject to the prince of this world, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

31*st*.—My father and my brother paid me a visit to-day, and my mind was much hurt by their conversation. My poor father inquired whether I did not sing Whitefield's hymns; assuring me, at the same time, that if I followed the Methodists I might never more expect preferment. My brother is altogether averse to religion, especially to Methodism. The way is too narrow.

12*th*.—This morning I had sweet communion with God on my way to the church. But, on thinking what I should say at night, when five of us met for Christian fellowship, several pertinent texts came into my mind. Here, again, Satan stirred up the latent pride of my heart. This may arise chiefly from my evil nature; but, from whatever source it may spring, it seems to contaminate all my thoughts, and words, and actions.

I have not read or heard of any one who has had such sore and bitter conflicts with the evils of nature, and the temptations of Satan, as have fallen to my lot. Perhaps the Lord is, by these conflicts, forcing me from seeking to be justified by the law, or preparing me to be useful to others. This thought gave me comfort.

16*th*.—This was to me a happy day. I went to the office, having shaken off my legal chains, and sought no more to fulfil the law in my own strength. Leaning on my Saviour, I felt divine support, and entered on duty without fearing the seductive habits of company. I was obliged indeed to be social; but all the while I was happy in God. He kept me as a little child, and showed me that I knew nothing as I ought to know. Here was a lesson I had never learned before.

Saturday, September 1.—This morning I was greatly comforted in reading the Holy Scriptures; and going to London, I heard Mr. Wesley for the first time. Next morning I heard him at Snow's Fields, on Matt. iii. 2: 'Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' He observed that the unawakened sinner is under the power of evil, and sin prevails; the justified has grace and sin, but grace prevails. He thence proceeded to show the necessity of having the kingdom of heaven set up in our hearts, in order to sanctification. Oh, how much I was blessed by hearing this discourse! I heard him again at Spitalfields, and twice received the sacrament to-day.

In the latter sermon, on 2 Kings v. 12, I was pleased with his criticism on Naaman's words. He

said, that our versions contained an egregious blunder, in reading verse 18 in the future instead of the past tense. It should be, "When thy servant *hath gone* into the house of Rimmon, and *hath bowed*,' &c.[1] His conscience accused him of worshipping an idol, instead of the God of the whole earth.

3rd.—I attended preaching at the Foundery at five o'clock, and at ten a friend took me to Miss Marsh's meeting for Christian communion. The friends spoke their experience, and they greatly encouraged me by giving their opinion that I was in a justified state. At the close of the meeting, Mr. Maxfield [whom a good bishop had ordained, to prevent Mr. Wesley from preaching himself to death] administered the sacrament. While they prayed, I thought the Lord gave me the witness of His Holy Spirit.

[Miss Marsh was a lady of good education; and, having a small independent fortune, devoted her life, and all she had, in doing good. She sometimes made excursions to Bristol, and other parts of the country, where she met classes, &c.]

30th.—To-day I came to London, but much harassed with the thought that I was flying from persecution, and leaving the cross behind. My design was to get food for my soul; and I was much blessed under Mr. Richardson's sermon, as also under Mr. Olivers's prayer.

17th.—I went to see my father, and found him low and dejected. He said it was chiefly occasioned by my being turned a Methodist; for my

[1] Dr. John Lightfoot makes the same remark.

patrons would hear of it, and cast me off to provide for myself. I told him that since the late change in my views, I durst not now spend my time and money in taverns and theatres. I now neither dared to swear, nor lie, nor commit the least known sin. I asked if he found me less obedient, or affectionate, or in anything altered for the worse. He was silent, and seemed satisfied with my defence.

18th.—I was this evening admitted into the band-meeting, and was much blessed in hearing those pious and holy souls who have long walked in the way speak their experience. I went also to another meeting, where the Lord's Supper was administered, as before.

23rd.—This day I returned to Purfleet, much refreshed and strengthened in my soul.

November 7.—The Lord was pleased to suffer my ague and fever to return, and sometimes to be accompanied with delirium—a disease which affects many in these low and marshy grounds. I have not been able to keep my thoughts stayed on the Lord, but have comforted myself with the thought that I was in the wilderness state described in Mr. Wesley's sermon[1]: and yet, all do not pass through that state to the promised land. I have also been much tempted to doubt of the pardoning love of God which I received while in London. Because it was not incontestably clear, I feared it was not really the case; and that my comforts were only the drawings of the Father.

[1] Sermon xlvi.

20th.—My fever and ague still continue, and my inward conflicts and temptations are unabated: I could scarcely think of God; nay, I seemed angry with Him, because He had not favoured me as some others who had not sought Him half so long. I felt also many sins and foolish desires rising in my heart, but did not give way to them. My mind, however, was greatly relieved in hearing Mr. Wesley, on Luke xxii. 31, 32, in which he showed how Satan was allowed of God to sift His children as wheat, that the chaff might be blown away. I saw that I had undergone that sifting, and much in the same manner as Mr. Wesley had described. I was, indeed, much edified when I heard that other believers had been assailed with the horrid temptations which had long pursued me.

21st.—This morning my soul was very happy in prayer, though my fever still continued. And when I am thus happy in God, my bowels most yearn after the souls of poor sinners. I have collected a few of these to attend our evening meetings, and pray and talk to them for two or three hours together, notwithstanding my fever. They have not been able to resist my words, but melt and weep under my feeble exhortation. While thus arguing and pleading with them, and seeing them unable to resist my words, I have myself found surprising comfort and joy; and my memory has become so retentive that pertinent texts have poured in upon me with uncommon light and force.

December 2.—This day I read over Bishop

Taylor's *Rules of Holy Living*, and fell down on my knees, praying that God would forgive all the loose speeches and slanders of my tongue. The book enlightened my conscience with regard to many of my sins. While in Portugal, I had wronged my deputy of £23. Had he complained to the Board, it is probable that they would have given it in my favour. But I was not sure that they would not have given it against me. No matter; though several years had elapsed, my conscience now compelled me to pay him the money.

Sunday, 9.—Mr. Windsor[1] met our little class in Purfleet. He was lively, and his words were blessed to us all. His words indicated earnestness of soul, strength of faith, and ardour of love. He greatly assisted me in the method of pouring out my soul to God; and he was the instrument of many blessings conferred upon me, particularly in his method of thanksgiving in certain parts of his prayers: no wonder that David should delight in the society of saints.

Next day, in reading Mark xi., the 24th verse was much blessed to me. I said, 'Lord, I do believe that all Thy promises shall be fulfilled to me.' And, indeed, in that hour it was given me to believe with the heart unto righteousness. God truly blessed my soul; and left not the least doubt of His then fulfilling His promise. The power of God rested so strongly on my soul that I felt my bosom glow with love; and was ready

[1] 'That saint of God, Robert Windsor' (Wesley's *Journal*, Feb. 7, 1790).

to say, 'Lord it is enough. If Thou givest more, take me to Thyself!' The Lord is merciful and gracious. He will not chide for ever. He makes us to hear joy and gladness, and causes the bones which He had broken to rejoice. O my soul, remember His marvellous works, that in all future temptations thou mayest trust in Him!

11*th*.—This morning the Lord was pleased to give me fresh tokens of His love. He overwhelmed me with His goodness, and I felt that I could love Him because He had first loved me. My prayer was that He would renew me in His divine image, create in me a clean heart, and bring in His everlasting righteousness. Truly He has heard my prayer when I had continually evil thoughts, and took pleasure in many of them. I told those things to Mr. Windsor, and was much encouraged when he said that believers in general were assailed in the same way. I named also a temptation to pride; after giving an exhortation, I had overheard a hearer say, 'What a wonderful young man is that! I hope God will bless him.'

21*st*.—My happiness has continued till to-day, when, alas! while talking to a man about the wolves in Portugal, I dropped a word which was not strictly true, with regard to my having seen those wolves. It was in a moment of confusion caused by his questions. I sighed and groaned most of the day for pardon; and next day felt my peace return, but not with the faith and confidence I had before. Thanks be to God, however, that this year, which began with so

much bitterness and anguish, ends with days of sunshine and peace!

January 5, 1765.—Two days ago I felt much encouragement while praying for the prosperity of our little class; and this morning the Lord seemed to receive my prayers when I besought Him for my relatives in London and in France.

21*st*.—This evening, being in London, I attended the bands, and happened to sit on the next bench to Mr. Wesley and the preachers. His eye caught me; and he asked me whether I found it good to attend the means of grace. I answered in the affirmative. He inquired again whether I did not feel an anxious desire after preferment. I rejoined, 'No'; my one desire being to love God. I then sat down; but was much harassed that I had not spoken my experience. The truth is, I was not then so happy as I had been in the beginning of the year. But oh, before the meeting closed, I was much comforted to hear two or three souls praise God, and tell of His marvellous grace.

February 3.—I have spent a comfortable hour with two or three persons who have a desire to save their souls. But pride began to rise in my heart from what one said of me. Alas! it mixes itself with all I do. It is neither decent nor wise to praise men to their face. I was buffeted also with hypocrisy for talking of the love of God when I felt but little of it in my heart. Yet my conscience acquits me of doing this to seek the praise of men.

6*th*.—I rose this morning at my usual hour,

before five o'clock, and read the lessons and Psalms, and a sermon by Mr. Wesley; which course I now always pursue. It happened to be the sermon on the witness of the Spirit. Some things in it staggered me, because I could hardly say that it was my experience. However, after reading I went to prayer, and was much comforted.

7th.—To-day I wrote to my father, and gave him an account of the change which grace had wrought in my heart. I ventured also to point out to him some prominent errors of the Church of Rome. And being very happy in the love of God, I wrote also to Mr. Windsor, at whose band-meeting my soul had been much refreshed.

27th.—I have been in a deplorable state of mind for some days past, and felt all my former peevishness return. O my nature! my nature! I really believe, had not God directed me to the sermon of Mr. Wesley on 'We are not ignorant of Satan's devices,' my spirit would have failed before the Lord, and I should have given up my hope as lost. My unholy tempers, and the men with whom I have to do, make me cry for entire renovation of heart.

I have lately read in the *Christian Library* a treatise on Fasting, by Robert Bolton, a holy minister and a skilful surgeon. It is either by fasting twice a week, or by early rising, that I am so weak as not to kneel upright in prayer for any length of time. If it proceed from the latter, I am sure it will be a far heavier trial to lie in bed than to rise at an early hour

10th.—I heard Mr. Wesley preach a charity sermon at Spitalfields Chapel, for the benefit of the poor weavers. He observed that by giving one pound the Methodists might gain ten, and stir up the Church of England to charities. At night he kept a lovefeast, and was in great spirits. Next morning he was about to set out on his long journey to the north of England and Scotland, till October. I believe there were few dry eyes in the place. My prayer was, 'O Lord God, do Thou accompany him wheresoever Thou shalt call him; and make Thy face to shine upon him! Do Thou give him a mouth, and wisdom, that none of his adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist; and receive him at last to Thy kingdom of glory!'

April 5.—This being Good Friday, I fasted till near six in the evening. Oh, that I had abstained also from sin! But in the course of the day I gave way to anger against a person; and it was nearly an hour before I could recover an even temperature of mind.

7th.—This being Easter Day, I had a gracious season at the Lord's Table; for the Lord was in the means. In the afternoon I was both comforted and tempted. I have often thought that the Lord would send me out to publish His gospel to perishing sinners; and yet I know I have not gifts for it, but am aware that I have pride enough; and, I believe, zeal, but fear it is not 'according to knowledge.' I prayed for humility, and that God would never suffer me to speak in His name, no, not even privately, in my

own spirit or wisdom or knowledge. Are there not murderers enough of souls already? Surely there are special receptacles in hell for false teachers. These are the armour-bearers of Satan, the captains of his thousands. What a blow he strikes at the kingdom of Christ when he gets one of these into commission!

25*th*.—Oh, how has the fear of losing my leg by amputation tormented me for the last four days! [Mr. Valton told me that the complaint in his ankle came at first with a chilblain. The complaint seemed to go away, and he walked for twenty years without any appearance of lameness. Sea-bathing was recommended as an antidote. However, in the course of thirty years, the bone became carious, and ultimately, after suffering the severest pains, it occasioned his death.]

Saturday, May 4.—I went up to town to hear the gospel, and spend the Sabbath in the divine ordinances. In the passage-boat there were three common women. The miserable creatures swore bitterly; and one of them addressed herself to me —from what motive I will not judge. I lifted up my heart to God for a word in season, and watched an opportunity to lay before them the greatness of their danger. I had scarcely begun to speak before one of them was pricked in her conscience. Another, the most daring of the three, was obliged to leave the cabin. The third wept once and again. I advised her to beg her bread, with assurance that in six months the Lord would direct her into a way of getting an honest livelihood.

19*th*.—This evening, about six o'clock, I was

at prayer, and felt so lifeless and forlorn that I resolved not to go to the class. My eyes were swollen with weeping, and I thought my friends were no way likely to quicken me. However, after prayer I set out, and had a refreshing time. A woman expressed a desire to meet with us; and next day her husband came, and related how he had attended the ministry of Mr. Whitefield, Mr. Romaine, and Mr. Madan in London, but had lost his good impressions by coming to Purfleet, and leaving the means of grace. She had opposed the truth in London; but now they both seem in earnest with God. Three are now added to our little flock. I read and prayed with them, and left them happier than I was myself.

June 1.—Company coming from London, I was aware that they would expect me to dine with them; and doubting how I could do it with safety, I hid myself in a garret for prayer. At length I resolved to set out for London; but the tide would not permit. In the evening, after calling the names of the labourers, I found a note requesting my attendance at the inn. So I was obliged to go; and had not been in their company long before they began to drink filthy toasts: I avoided drinking them. At length, they called upon me to give mine. This, also, I refused. One of the company gave a toast for me, and insisted on my drinking it. This, blessed be God, I refused, and took my leave. One of my most intimate acquaintances followed me, and entreated that I would not estrange myself from all my friends. Another of my old friends followed me;

and seeing my views were changed, he very much approved of my steady adherence to my religious principles. Thus, through the blessing of God, my soul escaped, as a bird from the snare of the fowler.

Sunday, June 9.—A small party of us, taking our dinners in our pockets, walked to Bexley, to hear the good vicar, the Rev. Mr. Piers. He was one of the first clergymen that opened their churches to Mr. Wesley and gave him the right hand of fellowship. He preached an excellent sermon to a dull congregation, on Paul's description of charity. In the afternoon we walked to Welling, and heard one of Mr. Wesley's preachers.

15*th*.—Three weeks ago, I went to the shop to visit our carpenter, who had lately joined the class; and last night I was present at his departure, I would hope, to glory. He was cut off by a fever in seven days. On being taken ill, he sent for me, and said he knew that his Redeemer lived. I doubted of this, as he had a quarrel with his neighbour. He bewailed his hasty temper, and I got them reconciled; and they received the sacrament together. A day or two before his death he said, 'What reason I have to bless God that I ever saw you! aye, to love you better than my own father': with many other feeling words. Yet I was suspicious that the wound was only slightly healed; not so by me, for I preached the law to him, and applied but few gospel promises, and prayed a whole day for his salvation.

21*st*.—I went again to London, that I might

enjoy Christian fellowship in the classes and bands, and hear the word of God. Next day I paid a visit to my father. Alas! how often did he take the name of God and Christ in vain in ordinary conversation! How strong must that infatuation be when one who lives in gross sin can be assured of his salvation because he fancies that he belongs to the true church; and that another, who prays and strives, cannot be saved, because he is not of his faith!

On Monday, the 24th, I heard Mr. Jones[1] on Matt. iii. 8, 9. While expounding John the Baptist's sermon to the Scribes and Pharisees, a man wept aloud, and went out. We got him into the vestry, and prayed with him. My soul, blessed be the Lord, was much refreshed during this visit.

25th.—This morning Brother Weaver came to tell me, with tears of joy, that he believed he had found the Lord last evening, after he went home from the class. We kneeled down to thank the Lord. My soul participated in his felicity. I exhorted him to hold it fast: we embraced, and parted; I being in haste to go to Chelmsford Assizes. This intelligence did amazingly cheer and refresh me on the journey.

[About this time, Mr. Valton began to study

[1] A medical man, of good learning and great abilities. When Erasmus, a Greek bishop, was in London, Mr. Wesley advised Mr. Jones to get ordained, that he might assist him at the Lord's Supper. But Mr. Charles Wesley, denying the validity of this ordination, would not allow him to officiate. Mr. Jones procured ordination from the Bishop of London, and became vicar of Harwich, where he closed his career.

physic, that he might give medicine to the poor. He also instructed one or more of the children, by hearing their lessons at convenient hours.]

My present practice is to rise at five, my constitution not allowing me to rise earlier. Before I dress I offer up a short ejaculatory address to God. When dressed, I pray for nearly half an hour, and read the morning lessons, and a few pages of some other book. Sometimes I substitute one of the Epistles. When my scholar comes, we read the Psalms, verse for verse, and then use Mr. Wesley's form of prayer (abridged and modified from Mr. Joseph Alleine). Before eight I pray in few words to God; and at nine I read another chapter, and sing a hymn, and then go to prayer. At twelve, after the office-hours, I offer up a short prayer, imploring forgiveness of the sins of the day, and that God would preserve me the remainder of the day. I then hear my scholar, and add a few short petitions. At one o'clock, I dine; and then with my scholar read the evening Psalm, and at three utter a short prayer. At five, my scholar and I pray for pardon and protection during the night. At six, I confess the sins of the day, and implore pardon. I then attend some meeting, or walk. At eight I use Mr. Wesley's form, in order to aid me the more in praying for others. I generally go to bed immediately after nine, when my prayer is but short, and presently fall asleep. Such is my daily walk with God, but much interrupted by journeys and business.

Yesterday I had a remarkable answer to prayer.

A week ago, the soldier and his wife complained in the class that they had no place of retirement for prayer; and that they were exposed to much ungodly language in the barrack. I was affected with their case, and led to assure them that the Lord would provide them a place; and yesterday the surgeon came to me in a considerable degree of warmth, some things having been stolen from the hospital: he insisted that the woman should be displaced. This enabled me to give the key of the room to the soldier's wife, where she and her husband could often retire for prayer.

August 17.—This day I had a special trial, to humble my soul. One of the workmen under my care gave me very abusive language; and yet I did not report him, lest it should be prejudicial to his bread. It harassed me all the day; meanwhile, I prayed for him, and felt nothing contrary to love.

October 4.—A nervous gloom and agitation seemed to seize me. Such a day surely I have never seen. O my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? I prayed for death, life being a burden. No power to pray, no faith, no love.

17*th*.—Yesterday I came to London for succour and comfort. I had prayed the Lord to open my way, which He was pleased to do. How good art Thou, O my God! What thanks are due to Thee, the almighty Parent of good! At the Foundery I heard Mr. Jones, at five o'clock in the morning, on 1 Cor. iii. 11–14. He comforted me much by showing that a believer could not perish; but that he who rests in justification, and does not

seek for sanctifying grace, must be saved by fire.

18*th*.—I heard Mr. William Darney, at five, expound the sixty-third Psalm. The dry and thirsty state of the wilderness suited my experience. I could say, 'O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee.'

[This preacher was a native of Scotland, and educated in high Calvinistic opinions. On joining Mr. Wesley, he professed a belief in the Methodist doctrines; yet the doctrine of sanctification, as taught by Mr. Wesley, he did not believe; and his favourite doctrine of the final and unconditional perseverance of the saints he never renounced.

[An aged Baptist minister in the north told me that Darney once preached in a yard, and stood on a hogshead. In the discourse he reverted to his favourite subject, perserverance: he declared that the saints could never fall; no, so sure as he stood there, they could never fall. The preacher here augmenting the powers of emphasis by a too heavy stamp of the foot, in went the head of the hogshead, along with the preacher; and it was with difficulty, he being corpulent, that his friends could extricate him.]

October 21.—This evening Mr. Darney drank tea with me at my lodgings, and the conversation proved very hurtful to me. I told him that for some time I had been wrestling with God for a clean heart, and for an instantaneous deliverance from inward impurity. To my great surprise and discouragement, he said there was no such thing

attainable on earth; that the notion was quite unscriptural; that while we are on earth we must be growing in grace, and always receiving fresh supplies of strength; and, consequently, that the notion of an instantaneous deliverance was quite unfounded!

After this discourse, I almost despaired of holding out to the end. I would have given a thousand pounds, had I so much money at command, not to have heard it. The consequences might have been worse, only a friend in the city had let me read a letter from Mr. Brandon, then in the Colchester Circuit, giving an account how he had attained the grace of sanctification. I thought I should, situate as I was, one day be conquered. On naming this to Mr. Darney, he advised me to marry. What a variety of helps there must be, in addition to what Thou, O Lord, hast done! Nay, death must lend the finishing hand. I almost repent coming up from Purfleet.

24th.—This evening my continual prayer was answered. Mr. Wesley arrived, in perfect health, just in time to step into the pulpit, and preach on Psalm lxxxi. 10: 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' What an extensive promise: Ask, and have! This discourse opportunely removed my doubts about an instantaneous salvation; yet, otherwise, I was blessed under Mr. Darney's sermons. I see, when we enter the field against the world, the flesh, and the devil, we must hang out the bloody flag—to conquer or die; no quarter to the old man; and victory is sure to the persevering soul.

December 25.—This morning I rose early, and met the society at four o'clock. At night we had buns, after the manner of the London lovefeasts; and God blessed us together. I received a very comfortable letter from Mr. Wesley, in answer to mine of the 17th. But, oh, my soul for the last six weeks has been greatly afflicted with nervous gloom, and sorely harassed with temptations, often more than I thought nature could have borne. This must be my infirmity, since I have peace with God.

26th.—This morning I could almost believe that God had cleansed my heart from sin; not from any more comfortable communion I had with God; but I thought it must be near, and that I ought to enjoy it, as it were, by anticipation—a sure way to bring it by believing. Lord, do Thou confirm it by the testimony of Thy Spirit! Amen.

January 1, 1766.—By the mercy and goodness of God I am brought safely to the beginning of the new year. May the Lord grant that I may improve the mercies of my added life, and spend every hour to His glory! In the evening I went to the renewal of the covenant at Spitalfields chapel. It was a solemn and devout season, and God was eminently present. I now find an abiding sense of His love to my soul, and confidence to believe that my sins are blotted out; yet the enemy sometimes causes me to doubt a little, though not now with either pain or fear. The cause is, feeling some emotions of pride, and a desire of the esteem of men: I start at the thought, and pray to be delivered from them.

16*th*.—I was much blessed this morning at prayer, and felt encouraged to believe that the Lord had cleansed my heart from sin; yet, sometimes in the day, I felt fretfulness and wandering thoughts. Mrs. Smitton, a lady on a visit here, related her experience in the class. I truly rejoiced in spirit, in hopes of finding the same grace. Under such testimonies I catch a flame from the celestial altar, which glows with hallowing influence. What, shall one member be blessed, and all the others not rejoice?

Sunday, 26.—This morning I was much comforted in prayer, and felt an overflowing of peace and love. In the evening, at our meeting, I expounded on the woman who had lost her piece of money; and a woman cried aloud for mercy while I was in prayer, and in a short time was enabled to praise the Lord. Her soul was so filled with a sense of God's pardoning love as not to be able to contain her joys. This mightily encouraged me, and, indeed, all the class. And we were the more encouraged because she afterwards retained her peace and joy. These are marks of the power and presence of God which cause the angels to rejoice.

February 8.—Through the mercy of God, I still enjoy peace, and have continued to do so for many days. Yesterday we spent in fasting and prayer, in our little class, for Sister Edwards, whose life was thought to be in danger.

11*th*.—William Thompson, a labourer, has joined our little class; and next evening brought his wife, and his brother and wife also, to our

meeting. The latter had said she should not meet again. Thank God, our little flock is now increased to nine.

April 14.—In the morning, while at breakfast, I felt my soul melted into tears of joy. In the evening of this day, it was suggested to me that I had not lost my Saviour, but that the terrible aspects of Satan and of hell, and the thought that I was quite fallen away, were only a taste of that bitter cup which some souls are called to drink, and which good Mr. Thomas Walsh[1] found on his deathbed. These considerations greatly encouraged me.

18*th*.—This evening Brother Weaver called me out to pray with two matrosses (privates in the artillery), who were committed for the murder of a man the preceding evening. The guard-room was full of soldiers. I trembled a little at first, but soon my nervous fears vanished away. I read part of Ezekiel xviii., 'When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness,' &c.; sung and prayed, then talked to them; but, alas! they made efforts to deny the crime. The soldiers seemed deeply impressed, and behaved with the greatest seriousness; so I closed by singing and praying a second time. Next morning I was with them again, and continued most of the time till they were taken away to the jail at Chelmsford. We collected them a little money, and I forwarded hymns and prayers for them soon after. I wrote to them during their confinement; but the case proving

[1] See vol. v of this series, p. 189.

to be one of manslaughter, their repentance vanished away.

28th.—I had written to Mr. Pennington to come and spend a Sabbath with us at Purfleet; and felt no misgiving after I had written the letter. However, yesterday, Mr. Mark Davis, a preacher in the London Circuit, came and preached, at seven o'clock on the road-side, to a pretty large congregation; and at six the congregation was very large. Next morning, at five, he preached in Brother Weaver's house. Here a storm arose on me and Brother Weaver. He must, with a wife and four children, be turned out of bread, and I dismissed; the store-keeper and the commanding officer being incensed against me for bringing a stranger to preach close to the magazine. Mrs. Edwards interfered, and a soft answer turned away wrath. By this visit five persons were added to the society; which was a happy circumstance, as part of the class were presently removed to Woolwich. During this conflict and storm I was sick at home of a fever and ague; and my medical attendant was little aware that it was the agitated state of my mind which occasioned the fever.

During this fever I was seized, as I thought, for death: my breathing ceased. My cry was, 'O Lord, prepare me for dying!' In this state I felt no condemnation for past sins, and had peace in my soul; but I expected that the Lord would have manifested Himself to me in that glorious manner which He is often pleased to do to His dying saints. Such, indeed, were my peace and joy after this crisis, that I really thought the Lord

had cleansed my heart from sin: my warm and hasty tempers seemed all subdued. If it be so, may the Lord bear His witness to the work.

26th.—Walking to-day with Brother Windsor, I told him my experience. He thought that God had indeed given me a clean heart; and I was not aware of feeling any wrong temper till, this afternoon, a degree of resentment rose in my heart. This good and happy frame has been connected with much enlargement in prayer, and an overflowing of tears, and praise and joy.

July 11.—For the last six weeks I have had great and sore conflicts with the enemy of my soul. My cry now was, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' Surely I cannot hold out beyond to-day. I prayed so often, that my knees were sore; and ate nothing, except a little bread and cheese in the morning, till four o'clock. Some of my past sins were thrust in my face. Yet, thank God, I am kept from murmuring. Much of this is nervous infirmity; for when engaged for God, and meeting with His people, this dejection is altogether removed.

August 12.—I have received great light by reading *The Gospel Glass*, in the *Christian Library*: a very searching book. I discovered many spots, but was persuaded the Lord would wipe them all away; and I saw so many marks of a sound conversion as to afford me great comfort, and, especially, as I was assured, that what I had discovered amiss should all be done away. Oh, how manifold are the mercies of God to me! To recount them would be as impossible as to number

the sands on the sea shore. God is love: and they that have most love are most in the divine favour; for God loves His own image.

24th.—Being in London, I heard Mr. Wesley with great comfort; and was delighted to find that Mr. Whitefield and he, though divided in connexions, were nevertheless of one heart and one soul.

29th.—This being my intercession day, which I spent much in prayer, I kneeled down at twelve; and no sooner was I engaged with God than I felt a strange and silent alteration, and for nearly five minutes began to cry, 'Glory, glory, glory be to God!' Then, after a moment of calm, I said, 'Thou hast delivered me from all my sin. Thou hast not failed of all that Thou hast promised in Thy word. Glory be to Thee, Thou hast given me the desire of my heart over all my enemies, whom, I trust, I shall see no more for ever.' 'O Lord,' my cry was, 'I am sure Thou hast destroyed my sin, and made me holy; I am sure Thou hast; I am sure Thou hast performed the work. Oh, give me the seal, and let me, if it please Thee, depart hence, and be for ever with the Lord!'

It was, however, suggested by the enemy, 'You see now the fruit of much prayer and of walking closely with God.' Grace in my heart replied to the tempter with shouting, 'Grace, grace, upon it!' My words were, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.' The Lord, I believe, has removed the stone from my heart, and will perfect His work with acclamations of grace and glory. Being now very happy,

I prayed that the Lord would not suffer me to be high-minded or vain-glorious, but ever keep me lowly at His feet, and never suffer me to lose the blessing. I fell down on my face and praised the Lord; for my efforts to pray failed. I was lost in wonder, love, and praise. I now felt

> The sacred awe which dares not move,
> And all the silent heaven of love.

Yea, I felt it, and rejoiced in the Lord.

I next, according to custom, sat down to read the Psalms and Lessons for the day; and then falling down on my knees, a much greater portion of love flowed into my heart. Oh, how I then began to praise the Lord for Mr. Wesley, for raising him up to preach the whole gospel! I prayed earnestly, not only for him, but also for Mr. Whitefield, that the Lord would give him to see the truth of what Mr. Wesley preached. I felt a great desire to write to him an account of what God had done for my soul, but was deterred by the fear of vain-glory.

September 1.—Various doubts have crossed my mind to-day whether the work which the Lord has wrought in me be real; but I have endeavoured all in my power to resist them. And, blessed be the Lord, I do not know that I have felt anything in my heart contrary to the divine change. Oh, I never could have imagined that there were such condescension, love, and parental tenderness in the great Jehovah towards worms of dust and corruption!

While writing, as above, oh, how the fire of love

did kindle in my soul! I long to be prostrate at the Saviour's feet: my soul is ravished with His love. What I have read in Mr. Wesley's *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* tended to comfort me, where he observes that 'most of those who found the blessing in London, a few years ago, were delivered from sin before they were filled with love.' This was much the same with me.

9th.—This has been a day of sore and dreadful temptations. While in Mr. Healey's house, after dinner, I sunk down on the floor. I requested them to leave me, that I might wrestle with the Lord. My conflicts were hard with flesh and blood. Yet the temptations coming from without, and being resisted, I felt no condemnation. I fled from them to visit the sick soldiers in the hospital.

19th.—This morning I heard, at Spitalfields, a most close and searching sermon: it came home like the address of Nathan to David, 'Thou art the man.' In the evening I attended the select band; and, no preacher being present, I was requested to open the meeting. The enemy afterwards tried to excite pride in me, because I had met the band. Yet I still believe that I have the blessing, though the evidence be not so discernible as at the first.

23rd.—To-day I visited my sister, just returned from France, where she had resided for eighteen years, quite a gay lady, dressed *à la mode de Paris.* Having presently after to visit in a family where they were all Roman Catholics, I feared to suffer loss in my soul, and besought the Lord; and was heard in that I feared. I spoke pointedly against

theatres, novels, and the prevailing follies of the age. And when mauled for Methodism, and leaving the true religion—as the Pope's supremacy, the infallibility of the Church, *cum multis aliis*—I was, by the grace of God, enabled to make such replies as they could not answer. But I saw their resolution was, 'Thou shalt not persuade me, though thou dost persuade me.' I stood firm against my dear sister's prayers and entreaties to return to the Romish religion. By and by she and others got angry with me, dropping delicate hints that I was a hypocrite, and that religion had made me mad. One young girl, however, seemed affected, and resolved to search the Scriptures, and with prayer, as I had advised her. Lord, I bless Thee for preserving me in this day's fight! I am, therefore, the more encouraged to believe that the Lord has cleansed my heart.

29th.—Yesterday, being Sunday, I attended at Spitalfields; and, after service, having retired for prayer, the Lord did, in a most wonderful manner, bless me. He poured His love so plenteously into my soul that I hardly knew how to contain myself. I thought I must have cried, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin!' I never was so overpowered before, and my strength was well-nigh spent in praising God. Oh, how did my soul exult, and gasp to breathe the purer air of heaven! The saws and racks, the Pope and purgatory, of which we had been talking a few days before, were now as nothing to me; all were trifles light as air. Christ is mine, and I am His.

October 8.—I have lately paid three visits to

Tilbury Fort, where I found two or three that have formerly been awakened under the word, but are now in a dark state: I have exhorted and prayed with them, in hopes of seeing the work revive. Four soldiers have now joined our class at Purfleet, who I hope will enliven our meetings.

November 16.—Being in London to enjoy the means of grace, I read Mr. Walsh's Life a second time; and was much comforted by finding that for many days he experienced sore temptations, and at the time deep consolations. I find it has been exactly with me as it was with him. After reading the account of his death, I went to prayer, and had a remarkable sense of the presence of God. Oh, how sweetly did He deluge my soul with His love! But, having caught a cold, I was violently seized with pain, and quite unable to walk: so I called a coach, and reached the barge. The next day I was worse, and looked for death every hour. But oh, with what transport was I filled! my joy was unspeakable and full of glory. Like Stephen, I saw, as it were, the arms of Jesus open to receive me. I exclaimed, 'Truly His blood cleanses from all unrighteousness!'

27th.—My health is so far restored that I went to the class. Two of those who left us are now dead. I hope we are clear of their blood. I am rather low in my spirits. The enemy harasses me about neglecting the sick, and the souls at Tilbury. How can I under these temptations 'rejoice evermore'?

December 11.—I have had a relapse of my fever,

and much depression in my mind. But though there was no praise on my tongue, yet there was peace in my heart. I fell back in my chair at Brother Healey's; and, with uplifted eyes and extended arms, could bless the hand that chastened me. In all this affliction and dejection I have been kept from murmuring. I have great need to add to my faith courage: then, under all my afflictions, I should be far more comfortable.

[For about two months Mr. Valton had a return of his nervous fever, accompanied with ague, as he himself states. A gloom of discouragement overspread his mind, but not without intervals of sunshine; and he was able most of the time to attend to the duties of the office.]

January 19, 1767.—This day my miseries became insupportable. I was only fit for Bethlehem Hospital. No demoniac could be worse. Cries, tears, groans, and moanings issued from my heart. I uttered words which I ought not, and yet could not help it. Like Job, I cursed the day of my birth, and concluded the day in an agony of prayer. My language was, 'Oh, I am damned, I am damned! I am fully overcome. Poor unfortunate young man! My poor soul, thou must perish at last. Farewell all hope. O my God, for Christ's sake take away my life! Lord Jesus, call me home, and deliver me from the evil to come, else I shall finally perish!'

20th.—This morning I rose at five, and was till eight in utter despair. Tears, and groans, and stretching out my hands, were part of my morning sacrifice. Yet I was kept from murmuring; but

earnestly besought the Lord to take away my life. In the course of the day I was comforted by a letter from a lady in London. She encouraged me to hold fast the promise I had received, 'Gad—shall overcome at last.' It is not one temptation, but a troop which have vanquished me. For the time I had power given me to pray, and to believe that I should at last overcome. O God, I bless Thee for this consolation; and I beseech Thee to forgive what in moments of anguish I have said amiss.

24th.—This morning, after praying with much deadness, I soon became quite another man: all my trials and temptations were suspended. The transition so delighted me that I scarcely knew how to utter the sentiments of my heart. I was so happy that I could scarcely pray; not so much from sensible comforts, as from an apprehension of the removal of my temptations and trials. I thought the Lord had answered the prayers of some one who had been engaged with Him on my account.

February 4.—Being in London for the last six days, and among Christian friends, my temptations have vanished away. Mr. Wesley comforted and encouraged me very much. On Monday I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Harle, at Mr. Windsor's. These have both been touched by the gospel within the last few weeks. I found, to my astonishment, that Mr. Harle lives at Rainham, but five miles from me. He took me home in his chaise to sleep, and next morning went with me to visit some sick people. Like

the young ruler, mentioned in Mark x., he has great possessions, and much zeal.

6th.—Returning to Purfleet, my temptations seem to return. Yesterday I was in Bunyan's iron cage, terribly harassed by the enemy. This afternoon Mr. Harle came to see me; he is full of peace and joy, and imagines he shall see war no more. He stayed to attend our meeting, and was much blessed; but my fleece remains dry. What augments my present trials is the remembrance of what I enjoyed after the 29th of last August, when for many weeks I walked in the light of the Lord, and talked with my Maker, as it were, face to face.

March 12.—I went to Mr. Harle's, to hear Mr. Glascock, whom he had invited to preach in his house. Soon after the text was read, Mr. Dearsby came in, the father of Mrs. Harle, dressed like a country squire, with a large horsewhip in his hand. He was a tall and powerful man. He and two more began the fray by calling wicked names. He then endeavoured to strike the preacher; but he evaded the blow by slipping upstairs. I sat still, expecting no further harm. He then came up to me, and asked, 'Who do you belong to?' I replied, 'To the king.' 'No; you are that dog,' &c., &c.; 'and I will write and get two or three of you turned out of your places.' On saying that, he drove me out of the room. I slipped into the kitchen; and, while engaged in praying for him and others, he followed me, violently swearing that he would broil me on the fire; and, seizing me by the breast and

thigh, he laid me on the bars. The two, thinking, perhaps, that he was going too far, rescued me, and drove me out of doors into the hands of a mob of thirty or forty men. The mob, merciless as their employer, pulled me about various ways, crying out, 'This is the clerk: pull him to pieces!' They tore my shirt from the top to the bottom. Some held me by my long hair; others by my cravat, which they called my bands; and one nearly succeeded in getting my watch. At length, through the mercy of God, the man who would have broiled me rescued me from their fury. Mr. Harle's brother conducted me through the yard; and at a small distance I met the vicar, the Rev. Mr. Walters, and his lady, come to see the after-game, who saluted me with 'Villain!' &c., &c. Three of the mob followed me with execrations, intending to put me in the pool at the end of the town. Suffice it to say, I reached home to thank the Lord for having escaped fire, and water, and blood.

14*th*.—For the last two days, since the storm at Rainham, I have enjoyed much of the presence of God, and find my faith in Christ much increased. In the course of the day, having besought the Lord for guidance, I wrote to Mr. Walters in vindication of my conduct in visiting the sick; for he had bitterly reproached me for this; adding that I should say they would be damned. Four more of our class, and the more pious too, are ordered on foreign service. May the Lord be with them where their lot shall be cast!

22*nd*.—Being in London, I dined with a Roman

Catholic party, consisting of my father, sister, and a young lady of well-cultivated mind. This young friend and myself had rather a protracted disputation about Catholicism. My father was very attentive; but my sister, like Gallio, 'cared for none of these things.' I perceived that my father approved of my arguments: the lady could not answer me with any degree of plausibility. After my father and I were left alone, he became very serious; and we parted with kind affection. I yielded to him in sitting for my portrait, to be sent to my brother in South Carolina; but on this condition, that I should appear in a plain dress, and my Bible in my hand, with this inscription on it, 'IN CHRISTO SPES MEA.'

July 7.—To-day I went to Sevenoaks for the re-establishment of my health; and found benefit soon after I got out of London. I spent my evenings mostly with a few brethren at the preaching-room, and once had much liberty in meeting a large class. The communion of the saints is known to none but pious souls.

August 14.—Being returned to Purfleet, I find my health better, and my soul refreshed. I had many good times in London, and led a sort of angelic life, frequently visiting the sick in St. Thomas's Hospital and the Marshalsea Prison. I begin now to find more comfortable assurances of my salvation, but have not been without temptations. My discouragements and want of power to pray have surely been owing chiefly to an infirmity which affects the nerves.

24th.—At our public meeting this evening we had two strangers, who are hearers of Mr. Whitefield. After singing, I felt enlargement in prayer; and, after a little circumlocution about setting up for a preacher, I ventured for the first time to take a text: Matt. v. 25, 'Agree with thine adversary quickly,' &c. The Lord opened my mouth beyond all that I could have conceived, and enabled me to speak as the Spirit gave me utterance. I sung and prayed three times, and yet was afterwards better in health than I have been for some time.

December 25.—This being the festival of the Nativity, thirteen of us met at five in the morning, and I explained 1 Tim. i. 15: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' In the evening we joined ourselves to the Lord and to His people, in the more regular form of a class.

February 21, 1768.—This was a morning of sore temptation till about nine o'clock. I thought the Lord was about to present to me again the bitter cup. I most earnestly besought Him to deliver me, to shield me from future evils; and in the midst of my distress that promise was applied, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' My soul felt its truth and power, and praised the Lord.

March 10.—I was favoured this evening with much enlargement in prayer; and the Lord blessed us much in our little meeting. I have of late remarked, that whenever I have prayed for anything in particular, I have soon after heard of something which has indicated a gracious answer. I have been praying much for an enlargement of the work of God; and was grati-

fied to-day by hearing that Mr. Wesley has been preaching in Chatham barracks, and that multitudes, both of officers and soldiers, had received the word with joy.

18*th*.—To-day I went and spoke to the colonel in behalf of three of our labourers who had lately joined the class, and now had received notice that they should be dismissed at the end of the month. The crime laid to their charge was—praying at meal-times. The colonel promised that he would dismiss the complaint. In the evening I had a gracious time, while enforcing a full and a present salvation, from those words, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.'

April 7.—The last few days I have been very busy in the magazine; and, blessed be the Lord, there is not a man that swears in my presence. And I find my soul fully as happy there as I usually do in my hours for reading and prayer. Like the labourers, I have now no time for reading and prayer, except at meal-times. An active life is better than a sedentary life for the nervous infirmities which still hang about me.

15*th*.—Brother Ottawill was arrested this morning for a debt he had contracted before his joining our class, and taken to the inn at Aveley, prior to his going to Chelmsford Jail. I went to console him, but had no thought of compromising the matter, having no money. His wife, the creditor, a young lady, and the two bailiffs, were present. We sung a verse and prayed, and the lady's heart was so touched that she offered to grant him a discharge on paying down six guineas.

I had but three, and she took his note for three more. On returning, an officer accosted me: 'Valton, I have good news to tell you. The Board have granted you £3 12*s*. for the pains you took in settling Mr. Gare's powder account.' This was an unexpected boon, at a time when I was destitute of money.

17*th*.—This Sabbath morning Mr. Harle fetched me in his chaise to Rainham; where, after dinner, I expounded the parable of the Prodigal Son. So the enemy has roared in vain: he cannot stop the work of God. It was far better that I took my ill-usage to a heavenly rather than an earthly court.

May 20.—Last night and this morning, being in agony of mind, I again looked over Mr. Wesley's *Treatise on Christian Perfection*; and was humbled to find that I had lost some marks of that happy state of mind. I saw that I was wanting in love, meekness, patience, and humility. I felt in myself a degree of dissimulation, and of inordinate love of the creature. I found that my spiritual union and communion with God was much diminished, and that dryness, wandering, and sameness had succeeded in my prayers. I saw that I had sustained a loss in my soul, and felt that I myself was alone to blame. Yet, while expounding the principal parables here, and in the villages, great power, and frequent tears, attend the word. O Lord, fully restore me again to the glorious liberty of Thy children!

June 10.—This day my dear mother in the Lord, Mrs. Edwards, departed this life. Happy

woman! safe landed at last on a broken piece of the ship. She cared for my soul as a mother for an only son. Would to God I had died for thee! The Lord has released her from great tribulation and afflictions. Sorrow and sighing are fled away, and everlasting joy is now begun. The will of the Lord be done. She has lived, in four years, to see two classes in Purfleet, one of women, and another of men. Lord, prepare my soul to follow!

August 3.—Since I have read the *Life of David Brainerd*, I have sorely lamented my unworthiness, and late decay of life and love. I have never read of any man whose life had so near a resemblance to my own, with regard to feelings, to trials, and desires. In how many places has he transcribed my whole heart, which I, for want of abilities, have omitted! Yet, in my narrow sphere, engaged in a public office, controlled by superiors, my longings and desires, disappointments and encouragements, have latterly borne a resemblance to his. But, then, as a little star differs from one of the first magnitude, so was it between that man of God and me, a worm of dust. My aims, not my progress, resembled his achievements; or rather as the miniature is to the original. I say it to show that the grace of God endeavoured to make me such, had I been faithful to its drawings. I honour his memory, and should have thought it a great favour to wash his feet.

19*th*.—Yesterday I expounded 1 Kings xix. 11-13: Elijah taking refuge in Horeb. I had no sooner begun than the power of the Lord descended

like a cloud, and rested on the whole assembly. Such clear illustrations, close applications, and pathetic exhortations, I hardly ever before was enabled to make. While pressing the words, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' it seemed as if the chariot of the Lord, and the horsemen of Israel, were come to hasten us away.

September 4.—A friend told me this evening that Lord —— had sent a message to his tenant not to receive me into his house, nor suffer me to come upon his premises. Dr. B.'s sermon accounts for this. 'Why should my lord come out against a flea, a dead dog?' My friend added that had not my interest been good, I should have been turned out of my place. This treatment made me rather low at first; but I soon recollected that I had deserved a thousand times more than this; and, that though man was unrighteous, yet God was just in suffering these trials to come upon me. But, seeing His Majesty's chaplain and a noble lord united against me, will not the people think that I am some hydra, sphinx, or other monster?

October 10.—Having for some time had an invitation to Gloucestershire, I set out this morning for Painswick, where I was received with much affection and joy.

14*th*.—Last evening I was at Brother Holder's class, and we had a blessed season; and, this morning, I spent two hours in conversation with him. He is a simple, sincere, and upright young man. The people flock round me with so much affection that I am afraid of myself, lest I should

rest here, and not seek after more of the love of Christ.

21st.—Last evening I met the class, and this evening I spent with Brother Newman. His soul was full of love, and he had no doubt of the blessed work of sanctifying grace in his soul. Another brother, affected by hearing my experience in the class, seems on the brink of deliverance. I told him that *now* was the accepted time, and that the Messenger of the covenant would come suddenly to His temple: and, indeed, it was so. He was excited to full expectation; and, in the middle of the night the Lord came and took possession of his heart. We rejoiced and gave thanks together, as being partakers of like precious faith.

November 7.—I arrived safe at Purfleet, after some hard contests for my Master, as well in the hoy as on the coach; for I soon let the people know my character. I found my friends also in a comfortable state; and we met together, now eighteen in number. The good Shepherd has kept them during my absence.

December 31.—This evening, in the class, I read two letters I had received from Painswick; from which I took occasion to press them anew to look for sanctifying grace. Two members of the class were so blessed that they stood up to praise the Lord. I retired, and closed the year in prayer.

Sunday, January 1, 1769.—The whole of this day was a rejoicing day to my soul. I found the Lord present in every duty. The society met at six in the morning for singing and prayer; and we plighted our troth to the Lord, and

covenanted to serve Him more and more in the coming year.

20th.—This evening I talked with a family, and prayed in Brother Weaver's house, who had just returned from the burial of their child. This is the second family that has left our meetings under a pretence that they must take care of their children ; and the Lord, in this low and unhealthy place, has soon taken all their children away.

March 1.—A revival has at last broken out in our little flock. Yesterday morning Brother Shepherd found peace with God, who had applied a line of a hymn with much consolation to his heart—

> How happy the man whose heart is set free !

This morning also, Brother Ottawill was roused with these words, 'Arise ; why tarriest thou ? and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' He arose to prayer, and the Lord spoke peace to his soul. It is rather singular, this was both his birthday and his wedding-day, as well as the day of his espousal to God. Oh, it was delightful to see these two brothers and their wives praising the Lord together ![1]

27th.—This moment a present of five guineas is brought to me for assisting Mr. Back in services

[1] Wesley wrote him, March 23, 1763 (*Works*, xii. 489), 'That God has called you to a more extensive work, I cannot doubt in the least. He has given you an earnest of it at Stroud, and your weakness of soul or body is no bar to Him. Leave Him to remove that, when and as it pleases Him. But I doubt concerning the time. It does not seem to be fully come at present. You are to do all you can where you are, and to be always hearkening to His voice, and waiting till He makes plain the way before your face.'

he had done for the Board, and for which he had received a gratuity. This makes good a promise I received from the Lord some days ago. Being myself in a little debt, and called to assist a poor family in distress, I had scrupled the propriety of doing it. Immediately it occurred to my mind that faith in God was better than ten thousand a year. I kneeled down to thank the Lord, and disposed of the gift in acts of charity.

May 11.—Since last Sunday, I have been greatly tempted and exercised concerning my expounding the Scriptures. We have public meetings three times a week, besides my visits to Rainham, Nookhouse, and Thurrock; and now our congregations, often, in times past, but ten or twenty, are so increased that the Board will hear that I am become a preacher.

July 1.—I propose, through the blessing of God, to be more minute in setting down my experience, as it may be useful to me at a future day. This day I have had hard conflicts with flesh and blood, and besought the Lord with earnest cries that I might die rather than sin against Him. Yet I cannot say that I felt sin in my heart. May the Lord bless me with a watchful spirit, a pure heart, and a loving mind! When the thought comes that it is expedient for me to marry, and that my soul might profit with a wife that truly loves the Lord; then the contrary thoughts come, that I should be unwilling to leave her when called to do good, and that I could not then be wholly devoted to God.

Lord, be my wisdom, and teach whatever is pleasing in Thy sight.

September 4.—Being returned from Aveley, where I had been to visit Brother Evans, lying sick of a fever, I found a message from one of my officers, who was sick. To my great surprise, it was that I should pray with him! I did so, and exhorted him as far as I durst proceed. I wonder what he will think of himself in case he should recover. Will he not be ashamed? The Lord be gracious to his soul!

October 19.—This morning I had great joy from one of my class calling to say that the Lord had given her the second blessing, a new and a clean heart. When I am dry and discouraged in preaching, I often hear of some good, which comforts my soul, and strengthens my hands.

November 23.—This being my birthday, when I entered my thirtieth year, I set the preceding day apart for humiliation and prayer, and in the evening met my friends at the usual hour. A circumstance, which I deemed rather remarkable, happened at this time. A letter was put into my hand, as follows:

'LONDON, *November* 21, 1769.

'MY DEAR BROTHER,

'IT is a great thing to be open to the call of God. It really seems as if He were now calling you. When I wrote last, you was not willing to go out; and, probably, He is now thrusting you out into His harvest. If so, take care you be not disobedient to the heavenly calling. Otherwise, you

may be permitted to fall lower than you now imagine.

'I am
'Your affectionate brother,
'J. WESLEY.'

It is not easy to conceive what dejection of spirit I was thrown into by this letter. I could neither think nor pray. But can God require me to make bricks without straw? Oh no, Lord! Thou art not an austere man. Besides, my weakness, my timidity, and want of gifts, are to me proofs that I am not called. Nor have I the least intimation that it is the will of God. Oh, what a dreadful apprehension of such an undertaking! It almost deprives me of life when I think of being thrust out!—Suffice to say, I gave Mr. Wesley my reasons; which for the present satisfied his mind, as appears from his reply:

'LONDON, *December* 2, 1769.

'MY DEAR BROTHER,

'CERTAINLY you are not called to go out now. I believe you will be by and by. Your inabilities are no bar; for, when you are sent, you will not be sent on a warfare at your own cost. Now improve the present hour where you are.

'I am
'Your affectionate brother,
'J. WESLEY.'

This letter was as pleasant as the grapes of Eshcol to my soul.

January 1, 1770.—I endeavoured to expound the parable of the Barren Fig-tree. The room was crowded, and we had a soul born of God—Sister Bayley, who sent to say that the Lord had set her soul at liberty. Mr. Pool, a brother of Mr. Weaver, came to me with evident marks of being awakened. He said he would join the society on his return to London; for which I gave him a letter.

We now divided our little society into four classes; viz. seven with me, nine with Brother Weaver, four with Brother Cockram, and four with Brother Healey: in all twenty-four members.

April 5.—Last night I was enabled to make a very awful and close exposition of Rev. i. 7: 'Behold, He cometh with clouds.' A stranger present seemed much broken down.

15*th*.—Being Easter Day, we met for morning service. Four strangers were present. I endeavoured to expound Acts v. 30–32; but was so tried and tempted that I was obliged to stop, and beg the people to pray; after which I went on with the discourse, and many were much refreshed.

25*th*.—This evening Mr. John Allen,[1] a young preacher in the London Circuit, came to see me; an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. He preached on adding to our faith virtue. His word was made a blessing to all. I had a temptation of Satan that nobody would now care to hear me, after hearing so lovely a young man as this. While I admired his eminent gifts and profound experience, united to the simplicity of a child, I was thankful to God for what I did enjoy.

[1] See below, p. 243.

I know, if He see good, He will give me more; and He even does crown my poor attempts with success.

May 23.—Dr. Hugh Smith, being consulted on the state of my health, advised me to lay aside business for a time, and use exercise on horseback. In conformity to his advice, I arrived this evening at Mr. Whitbread's, a farmer at Kirksend, near Barnet. While staying with this obliging family, I had frequent opportunities of meeting the class at Bentley Heath, and at Barnet, and also at Mr. Shewell's, an opulent family that showed me much kindness.

June 3.—This afternoon Mr. Allen preached at Bentley Heath, on turning to the Stronghold. It was a blessed time. In the evening he preached at Barnet. Next morning I rode with him to Whetstone, where he preached on the Trembling Jailor.

29*th*.—To-day, after an absence of five weeks, I returned to Purfleet, having preached and met the classes at Barnet, Bentley Heath, and Potter's Bar, as my strength would admit; and the Lord has given us His blessing.

August 10.—The last few days I have attended the Conference in London, and found much of the gracious presence of the Lord. My eyes were drowned in tears, and my soul filled with humility, praise, and love. The Conference now sitting in London, Mr. Whitefield, prior to his embarking for America, preached at five in the morning, and sat with the preachers till breakfast, and very much encouraged them to go on in their plain and

humble way. He dropped several expressions of disapprobation that several ministers in connexion with him had begun to wear a gown and bands.

September 3.—Last night, in a crowded room, I cried, 'Acquaint now thyself with Him,' &c. (Job xxii. 21), but found no liberty; I was shut up and tried most of the time. My memory often failed me, so that I almost forgot the thread of the discourse. A thought darted across my mind, 'I will speak no more in the name of the Lord.' I began to reason about it, and thought it might partly be owing to the weakness of my body, but chiefly to the dealings of God, who had justly withdrawn from me those gifts of which He saw I was unworthy. May the Lord humble my soul to the dust, and sanctify His paternal corrections!

6*th*.—A party of us walked this evening to Rainham, to hear the Rev. Mr. Elliott. He delivered a strong discourse on predestination. Some parts of it made me tremble, they were so pleasing to flesh and blood; yet I could by no means accede to his opinions. I was, however, engaged in argument till one o'clock in the morning. How different are these debates from the simplicity which usually follows our meetings at Purfleet!

October 8.—This evening, in a room full of people, I asked, 'Lord, are there few that be saved?' The Lord gave me great power, and the word went to the heart. Some were greatly alarmed, and others much stirred up. It was a time that will be long remembered. One young man, acquainted with religion, though not with

Methodism, received the word with meekness. Another declared he would leave his lodging, to come nearer to us.

18*th*.—This morning Sister Weaver came to say that she had no doubt that the Lord had given her, two days ago, the blessing she had been earnestly seeking for three months—a pure heart, and a token that, having justified her, He would also glorify her. Her soul was in transports of joy while she related these things. It also encouraged me; for having had a dry time in expounding the word, I found the Lord had made it a great blessing.

November 5.—Last evening I endeavoured to expound the twenty-third Psalm: 'The Lord is my Shepherd,' &c. Most of us found the Lord very present, and great refreshment. After the meeting, four persons gave in their names to join the society. This, in some sort, prepared us for the solemn intelligence which presently followed, that the Lord had called home to his great reward that eminent servant of Christ, the Rev. George Whitefield, who died near Boston, in New England. I wept before the Lord for our sins of ingratitude and unfaithfulness, which might have provoked the Lord to remove that burning and shining light from among us.

December 2.—Last week I have been much engaged in the business of the office and magazine; so that I have gone to preach without time for meditation; and this Sabbath I have been all the day engaged for my heavenly Master, except a little time when I was obliged to lie down. I had

this evening a blessed time while expounding Rev. i. 5: 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.'

25th.—This being the day of our Saviour's Nativity, in our morning meeting I expounded Luke ii. 14. Having read to our friends, in the preceding week, a discourse on the Lord's Supper, a company of us walked to Thurrock Church, and received the sacrament.

On the last day of this year he writes: 'How little have I done; and how small is the progress I have made during the past year! Lord, I fly to the arms of Thy mercy, and take shelter under the merits of redeeming love.'

January 26, 1771.—This evening I went to spend the Sabbath in London, and meet Mr. Wesley at Brother Windsor's. 'As iron sharpeneth iron, so does the countenance of a man his friend.'

March 17.—This morning I walked to Rainham, to meet the class, in Brother Weaver's turn, he being sick; after dinner, I catechized the children; and in the evening addressed a crowded congregation, in which were many strangers; and one, having the appearance of a preacher, so embarrassed me, that I had no power. Oh, what I have suffered on this account, and times without number! I thought, if ever I went to Rainham or Dagenham after this, I should be ashamed to walk the street. However, two or three of the friends mentioned the comfort they had found under the word.

22nd.—My mother having been many years

absent in France, I had lately spent some time with her and my sister, and had often talked closely to her about religion. But it is hard to convince the Papists. They always fly off from the Bible to the Church. My mother being now taken ill, I spent four days in London, often talking to her, and left her much better in health than I found her.

September 10.—This morning I set out again to spend a fortnight at Dugdale Hill, near Barnet, for the benefit of my health, where I employ my time in meeting the class at Barnet. There I heard Mr. Gathercart on Mark xvi. 16: a better discourse surely I never heard.

December 25.—I expounded Isa. ix. 6, 7: 'Unto us a Child is born,' &c. It was a time of heavenly refreshing. The Lord out of Zion gave us His blessing. At Purfleet it might indeed be said, The Saviour was born there.

31*st*.—To-day I dined with Mr. Wesley at Bow, and heard him preach at night. We held a watch-night, and ushered in the new year with singing and prayer. My temptations and sufferings during the past year have been small compared with preceding years. I have been enabled to go on preaching, and visiting the sick, in a constant course. My greatest trials have been timidity: when any well-dressed strangers have come in, I have scarcely been able to speak; and often have been ready to say, 'I will speak no more in Thy name.' But I could not recede: it was come to this, 'Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.' However, the success I met with, and the comfort

I felt in my own soul, encouraged me to go on; for a class was formed in most of the parishes within the compass of an easy walk from Purfleet.

January 1, 1772.—This evening I was at the renewing of the covenant at Spitalfields. It was a solemn time, and the blessing and presence of the Lord accompanied the means.

3*rd*.—Yesterday I returned from town, in the passage-boat, as usual, full of wicked people. I delivered my soul of them, and am clear of their blood. This evening I expounded the Barren Fig-tree, after which we renewed the covenant, as in London, and I believe our meeting was not in vain.

5*th*.—This Sabbath morning I walked to Rainham to meet the class, where I found a man and his wife, who had been awakened under Mr. Maxfield. In the evening, after preaching, one of the chalk people met us, who had been brought under serious impressions by hearing his child read the New Testament.

23*rd*.—A poor woman came to me to visit her husband, a labourer at the chalk-works. I found him in a burning fever, and scarcely any covering on his bed, in the depth of winter. I kneeled down to pray to the great Physician in his behalf. I gave him Dr. James's powders, and afterwards milder physic; so that the man, though weak, was at his work again in the course of the week.

27*th*.—This evening, according to appointment, I visited the sick man again, preached in his room, and prayed the people, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. The people being eager for the

word, I told them if they would get a room I would come to them. On that, Mr. Watson, a lime-burner, offered me one that will hold a hundred people. We measured it for benches, and I promised to visit them twice a week. Glory be to Thee, O Lord, for this opening! Oh that Thou wouldest give me such gifts and such graces as I need, to be a blessing to this people!

February 23.—This evening, to about fifty people, I had a blessed season while explaining Eph. v. 8: 'Ye were sometimes darkness,' &c. But I am embarrassed what to do. Mr. Bell, the manager of these works, so far approves of our meetings that he seems inclined to build us a chapel. In that case we must have a preacher. Here is the difficulty.

March 25.—Being in London, I went to the Apothecaries' Hall to pay for some medicines; and, to my great surprise, found the bill to come to a guinea and a half! I was in a strait, not having money enough. However, I borrowed a little of a friend. On taking tea with Brother Chambers, Mr. Dornford[1] (a wine merchant) came in: we walked to the chapel together; and, after preaching, he took me home, and gave me two papers of James's powders, a bottle of spirits of wine, some Bibles, and a guinea to buy medicine with. This was surely the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in my eyes. This good has resulted from my giving medicine; and a door is opened for the gospel among the poor chalk people. Add to this, on arriving at home, I

[1] See Wesley's *Journal*, Standard ed. vol. iv. p. 361.

found a guinea had been sent me by the Russian Ambassador for doing him a service about a year ago.

June 21.—Mr. Allen paid us a second visit at Purfleet, and spent the Sabbath. His sermon in the morning, on the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. iv. 2, 3), and in the evening, on examining ourselves whether we are in the faith, were heard with much attention, and the approbation of the people.

August 12.—I am now returned from Dover, where I have been for almost seven weeks for the benefit of the salt water. The preacher being absent, the Lord gave me power and courage to preach four times a week; and I have reason to believe the Lord made me of great use to the people. To Him be all the glory!

I had now an offer made me by the Earl of D——r to be page of the presence to the queen. I laid this overture, flattering in itself, before the Lord. The result was, my heart being on the sanctuary, that I was at Purfleet secluded and quiet; that I feared a post of honour, and at court, too; and having already a small clerkship under Government, which was quite sufficient for my support, I thankfully declined it in favour of Mr. Cooper, my sister's husband. Another reason was, that I had a few souls to care for; and, above all, a soul of my own; and I chose rather (yet not I, but the grace of God in me) to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the favour, honours, and riches of a court. Adieu, vain world, stand aloof with thy slighted charms! The Lord is my portion.

September 4.—I received a letter of thanks from my brother C. for conceding the place, which to him was worth £200 per annum.

December 14.—Last night I had a good time, and was enabled to discourse on the Beatitudes with great power. A self-righteous man, and one who had been of a bitter spirit, came up and thanked me for the sermon. This evening I and four of the brethren united to get an evening school for the poor children of the lime-burners, who are obliged to work by day. I trust we shall not only teach them to read and write, but also to be Christians. May the Lord succeed our work!

30*th*.—To-day I received a letter from my sister, acquainting me that an officer had dined with my Lord D——r, and told him that I had got a congregation, and preached to them; and that I also kept a school. My lord had told my father of it, adding that those things would obstruct my promotion; which had made my father's mind very uneasy; and he requested me to leave off all those things, as it would augment the happiness of his family.

June, 1774.—Towards the middle of this year my constitution was brought into a weak and reduced state; but, having changed the low and vapourish air of this place, I was, in the course of three months, enabled to return to the office.

For the last few years I have been fully employed, after the hours of office, in preaching, catechizing, and teaching in the school every night in the week, with the exception of a Saturday now and then; and there was a prospect of

much good resulting from the school, had not the wicked parents of the children frustrated the hope by allowing them to run wild on the Sabbaths.

Another thing I undertook, in compassion to the poor, was, the administering of medicine to the sick. This stripped me of money, exhausted my time, and involved me in debt. I bought an electrifying machine, and learned to bleed. I principally aimed at gaining access to sick-beds, and being useful to the souls of the people; and I must own that the Lord most wonderfully prospered my undertakings. The blind, the halt, and the languid, came, and received relief or cure. This success brought a crowd of patients. Their diseases obliged me to study books, and the remedies exhausted my pockets. And though Providence remarkably assisted me, yet the loss of time, and the want of adequate means, greatly hurt my soul. Thus it was, that in the zenith of my popularity and entanglements, God made a way for my escape, by removing me out of the place. And I humbly trust that the souls that have been convinced and converted will be my crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

These incessant labours, and the unwholesome air of Purfleet, so reduced my constitution that the physician told me my employment was not fit for my health. Another eminent man spoke in stronger words, that I was murdering myself, and that no expedient would restore me but exercise on horseback.

In this strait and dilemma, I wrote to ask the

advice of a few preachers eminent for wisdom and holiness; and they all with one voice advised me to give up all, and take a circuit. Among these was Mr. Samuel Wells,[1] with whom, in my visit to Gloucestershire, I had become acquainted. He was a lovely youth, of classical literature; and one who, I believe, enjoyed the pure love of God. He wrote in a very decisive manner; adding, 'I do not know but God has spoken the word, PREACH OR DIE.' This last word turned the trembling balance.

After the reception of these letters, I calmly came to the conclusion to forsake all, and, like Jacob, set out with my staff in my hand. But for some weeks my temptations to *delay* and *recede* were more violent than ever. Unknown are the sufferings through which I then passed. Seldom had I more than two hours' sleep; all was weeping and wailing before the Lord. On the one hand were the opposition of my family, and all their disappointed hopes of my preferment; on the other, my natural timidity, my health, and inability. Often did I retire to a neighbouring wood, and spend hours in bitter lamentations and cried before the Lord, praying for power to come forth. At length, early one morning, I rose, and, with the best preparation that haste could make, I came off to London. I there wrote my letter of resignation; and then, spreading it before the Lord, I fell on my knees, and said,

[1] A native of Cheltenham. He began to preach in 1770, and died ten years later. See a letter of his to Wesley in Atmore's *Methodist Memorial*, p. 449.

'O Lord, I thank Thee for having given me this place for almost eighteen years. And now, seeing Thou requirest Thy own, lo! here I present to Thee that which is Thine, and cast myself on Thy providence.' This I said with a melting heart, and with eyes deluged with tears.

1775.—After my letter of resignation, and all the way to the Leeds Conference, oh, how was I assaulted by the enemy for having made all these sacrifices for God, when, it was suggested, there was no God! For some days I was enveloped in a cloud of atheism. Surely had it not been for this sore temptation, I could not have known the strength and malignity of a fallen angel. But on arriving at Leeds, and lodging with a cheerful Christian family, all these bodings vanished away; nor have I ever since been assailed with the like injections of the enemy. None, however, but the Lord Himself can tell what I passed through for the last two months before I came to Leeds. This I can truly say, that the Lord has thrust me out into the work; for in no one's case, perhaps, did ever such a group of concurring circumstances meet to make manifest the will of God. And now, O Lord, seeing Thou hast brought me forth, do with me as seemeth good in Thy sight, and send me wheresoever Thou wilt.

One circumstance tended to humble me. A few evenings before the Conference, Mr. Pawson, the superintendent of the Leeds Circuit, desired me to preach. The congregation was unusually large, compared with the small groups in Essex, and two or three times my memory failed me; but the

people confessed to be much blessed under the word. Here my soul was exceedingly happy, being all the day engaged in spiritual exercises.

August 2, 1775.—I was this day admitted on trial as a preacher, and appointed to the Oxfordshire Circuit, which comprised part of three other counties. My colleagues were Samuel Wells, jun., and George Shorter. It was joy to me to labour with a man that I knew and loved.

Another boon of equal joy seemed to drop from heaven. On arriving at Witney, the first place in the circuit, I found a letter requiring my presence in London. Here, to my infinite surprise, I found all my relations very cordial, and not a word of reproach on my conduct: and during the few days I was in town, the most high God, in His providence, made a comfortable provision for me for life; so that I can preach without being burdensome, and have a tolerable competency for age, when infirmities may admonish me to retire. I was overwhelmed with this astonishing token of the goodness of God, for which I desire to praise Him for ever.

[Mr. Valton's pension for eighteen years' service was not less than forty pounds a year. He never would take any allowance from the circuits, except his food. He gave the surplus of his money to the poor.]

In the Oxfordshire Circuit I laboured for two years. It was a very hard circuit, the rides were long, and fuel very scarce; but the Lord was my support. The first year was a pruning time; the second was a year in which we gathered many

souls. It was a great trial to me to leave this loving people, and so many excellent families; but, as the Lord so required, I bowed to His will.

[Mrs. Weaver, whose husband succeeded Mr. Valton as leader of the classes in Purfleet, told me that Mr. Valton came about this time to visit the little flock he had gathered with so many toils and tears, and strengthened their hands in the Lord. During this visit an officer came to see him, and, finding him now dressed in a plain suit of black, exclaimed, 'What, is this the little gentleman that came to us in a cocked hat and a gold-laced waistcoat?' 'It is, sir,' rejoined the other; 'but the Lord, since that time, has done something under the waistcoat.' After this, Mr. Whitbread,[1] celebrated in Parliamentary records, built a little chapel, and gave a Bible; but the preachers, on account of distance, often neglecting, and a Calvinistic schoolmaster settling there, who was a preacher, the Methodists were gradually superseded.]

At the Bristol Conference, 1777, I was appointed for the Gloucestershire Circuit; and blessed be God, our labour was not in vain. Our rides were often long, travelling from Stourport, Worcester, and Stroud. The friends would have borne with me a second year, but my constitution was so impaired as not to be able to bear the extensive journeys. I cannot, however, omit naming the lovingkindness of the Lord to me this year. When seized with a bilious fever, which

[1] The intimate friend of Fox, and leader of the Opposition under Pitt.

lasted some weeks, my lot was cast at Stroud. Here I met with the tenderest of nurses and friends, in Mrs. Scudamore and her family, who had me removed to their house, and showed me no little kindness; where, with the help of God, and a skilful apothecary, I was soon restored to my labours. During the whole of this year I have found much peace in my own soul, which has the more supported me under the hardships of an itinerant life.

In 1778 I was appointed to the Bristol Circuit. As soon as I received the letter from Leeds, my soul was in the furnace; being awed at the idea of standing before so many wise and holy persons as then were in Bristol and Bath. I wrote immediately to Mr. Wesley, praying to be sent anywhere rather than to those cities. But he still kept to his appointment, in spite of all remonstrances. My distress and timidity continued for some days; but, laying it before the Lord one evening, I was much relieved by two lines of a hymn, powerfully applied to my mind—

> Wait thou His time; so shall this night
> Soon end in joyous day.

I came to Bristol in a weak state of health, and was presently obliged to retire to a kind friend's house, near Pensford, where Mr. and Mrs. Wait showed me every kindness for the restoration of my strength. Here I gave myself up to prayer, which increased my spiritual strength also, and enabled me to enter on my work with joy. I have cause to rejoice that I had in Mr. John Goodwin

and Mr. James Wood the kindest of colleagues. In Paulton the work broke out wonderfully; and about eighty souls were added to the society, and a preaching-house was soon afterwards erected. The effect of the word on the poor colliers was such as I had never witnessed before. At Fishponds also we had a blessed revival of religion. This was, indeed, a year of consolation; the people were uncommonly affectionate, and I should have been glad to end my days among them.

1779.—My second year in the Bristol Circuit was attended with some heavy trials, particularly the dispute which happened between the superintendent and the clergyman Mr. Wesley had stationed at the new chapel in Bath.[1] The issues were that Mr. M'Nab left the Connexion, and the clergyman set up for himself in Dublin, taking with him above a hundred persons, among whom were the richer members of the Dublin Society. This dispute gave a general wound to the cause. However, the time I was there, I enjoyed a heaven upon earth, and left the friends with many regrets. The last place I left was Amesbury, where I remained a fortnight for my health, and experienced every kindness from the lady of the house for her Master's sake. Mr. M'Nab, however, returned the next year; but did not continue long in the circuit.

1780.—At the Bristol Conference I was ordered for the Manchester Circuit as the assistant

[1] This was the Rev. Edward Smyth. For the M'Nab case, see Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, vol. iii., pp. 303-12.

preacher. On arriving, my soul entered into great sufferings. The regrets at leaving my Bristol friends, and the dread I had upon my mind concerning the office that was laid upon me, quite drank up my spirit. However, I set my shoulders to the work, and endeavoured to lay out my soul in the discharge of every duty. God was so far pleased to own me and Mr. George Snowden, my fellow labourer, that nearly three hundred souls were added in the town; and there was a general revival throughout the circuit. At Stockport the chapel was enlarged, and at Ashton a new one erected, and a promising prospect of a great work in the ensuing year.

When I came first into this circuit, I was quite a stranger to the habits and complexion of the people; and I construed their shyness to strangers into want of love. Some of the stronger trees and plants are slower in opening their bud and bloom. The issues were, that I found them a most affectionate, generous, and steady people; and, with tears in my eyes at parting, I could say that they lie near my heart.

The main circumstance which encouraged me was, the breaking out of the work of God in different parts of the circuit. My constitution I found too weak to bear the journeys, and was obliged to call for additional help in a third preacher. This set us at liberty to try and take in new places.

This work would have been more extensive had it not been for two or three leading members of the Rochdale society, who demanded an unjust

share of our labours. Their opposition was so strong that it quite broke my spirit, and cramped my future usefulness. It obstructed all my intended visits to the populous villages.

Sometime during the winter I went with a few of my Oldham friends to a village called Gladwick, consisting of colliers and weavers. I preached in a house with comfort and joy to thirty or forty people, and many felt the power of the word. I visited the village a second time, and was favoured with the same blessing and presence of God. But on going the third time, and with a design to preach in the open air, as Satan's kingdom began to suffer, several being awakened and joined to the society, the enemy collected his forces, armed with stones and noisy instruments, to make a furious attack. They literally gnashed upon me with their teeth, and so pelted me with stones and coals that, after a while, I was obliged to retire into the house. Thank God, I was unhurt. We sung and praised the Lord in the house. Meanwhile, the mob was waiting without for another assault; and as soon as I and my few friends were out of doors, dirt and stones were poured amain: yet none of us were hurt, except a woman, who received a severe cut in the head.

These storms without were small compared with the inward conflict I had from myself. When the large new chapel in Oldham Street was opened, and when I saw such large congregations, I suffered inconceivably from my old feelings of timidity. Standing in that pulpit was like

standing to be shot. The good and gracious Lord, however brought me through the year.

[*December* 31, 1780.—This day I received in several new members that have been on trial (in Manchester). I had them all in front of the congregation, and read the substance of the Rules to them. Gave them a suitable exhortation, and finished the ceremony with a hymn and prayer adapted to the occasion, and God made it a gracious season indeed.—*MS. Journal.*]

1781.—At the Leeds Conference[1] I was appointed a second year for Manchester; but, fearing some extraordinary trials from different parts of the circuit, and disapproving from my soul of some late things which had occurred, I entreated that I might be sent to Birstall. But my kind friends in Manchester were determined not to part with me without an answer to their petition: so I left the contest, having obtained leave to go and bathe at Liverpool; where I experienced every kindness from the people, and spent my time to much profit and comfort to my own soul.

My lot having fallen for Birstall, I was received with undeserved affection by the people. This encouraged me to undertake some difficult things with regard to discipline, at which my nature shrank. And yet, through the help of God, I was brought through full as well as I expected.

[1] 'The pious Mr. Fletcher attended it, and preached three or four times to us' (*MS. Journal*). He saw much of Fletcher this year, and says that at Birstall 'His presence quite daunted me, so that it was with difficulty I preached from my favourite text, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday," &c.'

This I found a most easy and suitable circuit to me, as I could not then, on account of pain in my breast, bear much riding. Yet, how favoured soever our lot may be, it is through much tribulation we are to enter the kingdom of God; and the path of suffering is the road to glory.

I experienced the greatest kindness and support from my colleagues, Messrs. Briscoe and Shaw; through whose aid good has been done; besides a remarkable promise of a revival sealed upon my heart. The promise was given me on this wise: I was at Daw Green, the southern part of the town of Dewsbury. Being alone in my chamber, I prostrated myself before the Lord, to ask the outpouring of His Spirit on so populous a neighbourhood, while my eyes were suffused with tears. I then came down to engage in family prayer; and the power of God fell upon me, enabling me to pray with much enlargement, as the Spirit gave me utterance. I had a blessed revival before my eyes, and we praised God by way of anticipation; for I was fully assured the Lord was about to work. My petitions were uttered in the assurance of faith; for I knew that God would make bare His holy arm. The family felt the divine unction; and I continued till I could scarcely rise from my knees. I went upstairs; but could engage in no work except prayer and praise. My soul was truly in travail for Zion to bring forth children.

I should not omit one unpromising check on the ardent wishes of my heart; a great loss to us, but not a damp on our hope. Mr. Fletcher, on the 12th of November [1781], stole hallowed fire from

my people by taking away Miss Bosanquet to Madeley. I and a few friends accompanied them to Batley church. Surely such a blessed wedding I never knew before. By request, I improved the occasion in the evening[1] from these words, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon His name.' It was truly a refreshing time; and many prayers were offered that eternal blessings might crown the devoted pair.

October 28, 1782.[2]—This evening I preached at Hanging Heaton, a village near Dewsbury, with much power, and many felt the mighty energy of the word. After preaching I met the society; and while singing the first hymn, the power of the Lord fell upon me, and, soon after, upon all the people. They were all in tears, and we scarcely knew how to conclude. I had never known such a night since I left Paulton, in Somerset. God was indeed in the midst of us, and we all rejoiced with unspeakable joy.

December 26.—After preaching twice this day, and riding twenty miles, I walked to Hanging Heaton to hold a watch-night. The service of preaching, prayer, and exhortations continued

[1] At Cross Hall. 'His words did not fall to the ground; many were greatly refreshed. After preaching there was a sweet contest among us; every one thought 'I, in particular, owe the greatest debt of praise,' till we jointly agreed to sing 'I'll praise my Maker while I've breath.'—John Fletcher to Wesley (Wesley's *Works*, xi. 331.)

[2] The *MS. Journal* shows how much he was pained at this time by the spirit shown at Birstall, where the trustees refused to settle the chapel upon the Conference plan. At a private meeting Valton was called the 'greatest villain.'

from seven o'clock to one in the morning. Here the work broke out in a very astonishing and extraordinary manner. The cries and agonies of the people were very moving. We sang and prayed till near twelve, and no deliverance was wrought. I then went to one who seemed to be agonizing in prayer. I kneeled down, and prayed with her for deliverance as far as my exhausted strength would permit; and presently she found peace. I then went to another, and she also, in a few minutes, found peace. Thus four or five were set at liberty in the same manner. In all, nine persons that night obtained a sense of God's forgiving love. I never knew such a time before. Oh, that God may bless and keep them in His faith and fear!

31*st*.—This night I went to Earl's Heaton, and had a good time. One young woman wept aloud for the disquietness of her soul. She was cruelly handled by the enemy for a long time. I prayed and sang verses of hymns till my nature was exhausted; but she still affected our hearts with her piercing cries and throes. At length I went to her, and kneeled down in earnest prayer. She soon became calm, and returned home with several friends rejoicing in the Lord. I trust the Lord will here also revive His work.

January 20, 1783.—Two evenings ago we held a watch-night at Chidsill, and had an excellent time. It lasted for five hours. Four persons were very earnestly groaning and crying for mercy for a long time. Two or three of them were so deeply convinced that they trembled like a leaf in the wind.

At last three of them obtained mercy, and went home rejoicing in the Lord. Another dropped down on the floor, and many were deeply wounded.

21st.—Last night, at Hanging Heaton, we had a wonderful time; and the power of the Lord was present both to wound and heal. After the sermon we continued in prayer for two or three hours, amid the groans and cries of many in distress. We told the Lord that we would not depart without their deliverance; and God was graciously pleased to grant our importunate requests. We then gave thanks, and sang joyful hymns of praise.

23rd.—This evening I preached at Danbrook, on Dewsbury Bank. As soon as I began giving out the first hymn, I felt the power of God descend upon me; and gave notice to the people that we should have a glorious time. Presently cries, and groans, and agonizing prayers were heard all around; and several were in distress. In a while the anguish of their hearts was removed, and their souls entered the glorious liberty of the children of God.

27th.—This evening we held a watch-night at Ruth Williamson's, near Tingley Moor. The congregation was large; and the Lord made it a time of refreshing from His presence. Cries, tears, and prayers were poured out for some hours. Three found peace with God, and were made remarkably happy in His love. Two of them experienced much anguish, and uttered the most moving prayers.

February 1.—At Chidsill this evening we had an awful time with the people. Three were under

strong convictions of sin. One young woman was roughly handled. At length she cried out, 'Let me lie prostrate at my Saviour's feet,' and immediately was made happy in God. We had reason to believe that three of those under conviction found peace.

3rd.—I called this morning, by request, to pray with a sick woman at a public-house in Shaycross, who had been no friend to religion. Presently, several of the neighbours were gathered into the house. While I was at prayer, violent convictions seized the sick woman, which communicated to others who were present. They cried earnestly for mercy, and with many tears. I continued in prayer till two of them were set at liberty. This was indeed a solemn and awful hour. But my poor body fails under the pressure of these ardours and fatigues. Yet I rejoice in spending my whole strength for my Master, and bemoan the insufficiency of my frame to support the energies of the mind.

12th.—This evening, after preaching at Daw Green, I desired the bands to meet, to speak their experience as usual; but our attention was presently called off to assist a young person who had been under conviction during the sermon. Several others soon felt the power of grace; while some made it known in the village that the work was broken out in the chapel. They came rushing in, and were seized with divine solemnity and awe. About ten o'clock the prayers began to subside, when it appeared four or five persons had found peace.

13*th*.—This evening I preached at Batley, but with little power, my nature being exhausted with the exertions of the three former nights. However, it was soon found necessary to continue the service, as several were 'pricked in their heart,' and, after some conflicts, professed to have obtained comfort from the Lord. In all these watch-nights I have been assisted by the leaders of these classes; for God has been pleased to employ plain and weak instruments in the accomplishment of His great work. Blessed be His great and glorious name for ever![1]

March 3.—This afternoon I catechized the children at Hanging Heaton; and while in prayer, many of them began to cry aloud for mercy, and continued for the space of two hours. I believe that they all, for the time, felt a good influence on their hearts. Thus, 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings the Lord has ordained strength.'

4*th*.—This forenoon was spent in visiting the people from house to house, and the afternoon in meeting classes to renew the tickets. After sermon at night we continued in prayer till midnight. The divine presence descended on the people, exciting them to weep and pray. Nine persons found peace and comfort, while many others remained under conviction.

11*th* and 12*th*.—At Ardsley and Morley I held watch-nights the preceding evenings; while many

[1] Wesley says, February 13, 1784, 'It pleases God to bless Mr. Valton wherever he turns his face, but his body sinks under him, and he is still hovering between life and death.' (*Works*, xiii. 5.)

have wept aloud in distress, and some found peace with God.

13*th*.—We had a watch-night at Birstall, and on the 14th at Gildersome; and the Lord was in the midst of our assembly. I was nearly worn out; but, thanks be to God, towards the close of the meeting my lamp was replenished with fresh oil, and I was amazed at my support during the week.

24*th*.—After visiting the society at Hanging Heaton, from house to house, most of the day, I preached in Joseph Bennett's room, with great power; and many were deeply wounded under the word. We continued in prayer, singing short hymns at intervals for about three hours, amid the cries and groans of the contrite. Some found peace, and others went home in deep distress. The next morning I went to see two poor mourners. Others came into the room, and, while singing and praying, one found peace; but several others were left in distress.

25*th*.—This evening I preached at Earl's Heaton, in a rather dull manner; being much disturbed by the constant coming in of the people. However, when we began singing and prayer, at the close of the sermon, the Spirit of the Lord was poured down upon us. The cries were so strong and loud that we could not be distinctly heard, while others fainted and were convulsed. We continued these exercises and wrestlings for the space of five hours. Here the enemy of souls made the most violent opposition to our work that I had ever seen. Oh, how did it endear the Saviour to me, who hears prayer, and delivers

His people from the cruel tortures of the foe! It was an awful time; but the cries of the people were cheered with verses of praise, sung for those who had found peace. I trust many will have cause to bless God for ever for having brought them to that place.

29th.—This evening I preached a funeral sermon at Chidsill, and afterwards kept a watch-night. The whole of the services were in the open air; a lantern supplying the absence of the sun and the moon. It was a very solemn time indeed, and attended with a general blessing. Some hundreds of people were present; and four, I was told, found peace with God.

April 1.—I was obliged to spend nearly three hours out of doors at Tingley Moor. The crowd was very large; and the Lord owned the means by the conversion of a few who came to hear.

12th.—At Chidsill we again prolonged our worship, with a very large crowd in the open air. Some were deeply distressed, and a few were set at liberty.

14th.—This evening the crowd being great, we got into a barn, at Hanging Heaton. Ten, I was told, among whom was a backslider, found peace with God. These wrestlings and intercessions continued for five hours. Like the gay world in their balls, we stayed till the midnight hour.

15th.—This evening we had a wonderful time at Batley Carr. The rich as well as the poor mingled in the crowd. Misses Kitty and Nancy Wooller were the chief mourners. Miss Newsome found peace with God, and is since taken to paradise.

16*th.*—At Morley we had another watch-night; and had it not been for the unbecoming prayers of two young converts, I believe we should have had a wonderful time. This was the first appearance of wildfire that we have had; and I was sorely distressed about it. I feared to speak, lest I should do harm. But Morley being a Presbyterian town, ordinary means perhaps cannot affect them. I felt a great want of wisdom, and entreated the Lord to teach me how to manage these appearances of disorder. We closed the meeting, leaving two or three in distress.

25*th.*—Having changed with the Huddersfield preacher, I went to Mirfield, and met the society after preaching. I advised them to hold prayer-meetings after sermons; and, above all things, to pray for the promise of the Father. I proved that the work in the Birstall Circuit was scriptural; adding my belief that the reason why we did not see more conversions after sermons was because we knew not the Scriptures nor the power of God. While I was speaking, the power of God fell upon two or three persons; presently there was a loud cry. We continued in prayer for two hours; and one soul found favour with the Lord.

May 7.—We held another watch-night at Daw Green. Soon after the close of the sermon, we heard a cry for pardon and peace. The spirit of contrition was poured upon us. Some found peace and joy through believing; while others went away in distress, being advised to lay their case before the Lord at home.

8*th.*—We had a large congregation in a barn at

Batley: for the *laythes*, or barns, at this season were empty. Many were cut down under the word; and two cried aloud for mercy, 'and were heard in that they feared.'

14*th*.—Last night we had a watch-night at Heckmondwike; and we had, in the issue, a very awful time. A small company stopped behind, to whom I spoke on laying hold of the promises. The word was like lightning. Some were deeply affected. We continued in prayer till midnight, when four persons found redemption through the blood of Christ.

July 1.—Sister Briscoe expecting to remove, I met her class, in order to divide it, and to appoint fresh leaders. We had a full room; and in my last prayer, the Lord visited us indeed. Such a night I scarcely ever knew. Heaven seemed to come down to earth. Now it was that the promise given me, nearly a year and a half ago, was fulfilled to the letter; and in the very spot where it was first applied to my heart. Many, and at the same instant, cried aloud for mercy, and all seemed to attest the refreshing power of the divine presence. One young woman was much distressed. I pleaded the promise (John xvi. 23) in her behalf, that God would give us whatsoever we should ask in the name of Christ; and she rose calm and serene. The watch-night kept here the ensuing evening was attended by a crowd of people, equal to a Sabbath-evening congregation.

3*rd*.—This night, at Hanging Heaton, I was six hours on my legs. The crowd was large, and we had a wonderful time. One aged man dropped

down on the floor, and many cried aloud, and were comforted. Some of the brethren continued in prayer till three in the morning. This was truly one of the days of the Son of Man.

7th.—Being on my way to the Bristol Conference, I called on my old friends at Ashton among whom I had laboured when in the Manchester Circuit. After preaching I met the society, and gave them an account of the great work of God in the Birstall Circuit. I then particularly insisted on the doctrine I had lately enforced, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, said the Lord of Hosts.' Presently, the cries, groans, and prayers of the people drowned my voice, and the power of God rested on us in a wonderful manner. One received pardon, another perfect love, and a backslider was restored. Much more good was done, I believe, than was known. We continued some time in prayer; for it seemed as if the people could not leave the throne of grace.

[Mr. Valton was clerk of the Bristol Conference. He says: *August* 5.—Our Conference ended. We had, upon the whole, a very loving Conference, and it was much solemnized by Mr. Wesley's illness. But God has again heard prayer for him: blessed be God!—*MS. Journal.*]

August 20.—This year I returned from Bristol to labour another year in the Birstall Circuit.[1] But in looking over my journal, I find my accounts

[1] Wesley rallied after eighteen days of serious illness, but the gravity of the situation was keenly realized. He visited Birstall in September, but failed to bring the trustees to reason.

this year much the same as in the past. Our watch-nights, prayer-meetings, and lovefeasts were owned of God. The work of the Lord went on prosperously, and many were convinced and converted to God. A new and beautiful chapel was begun at Dewsbury; and it was with great pleasure I add that the young converts remained steadfast in religion. But the heavy burden of being assistant (to Mr. Wesley) in the care of two thousand people in society, and the many watch-nights that I kept, with all the fears and anxieties that I felt for my circuit, sensibly sapped my constitution. Violent headaches, often accompanied with giddiness, almost overcame me. Nevertheless, through a great flow of natural spirits, and the daily help I received from the Lord, I was enabled to bear up through the year. I need not say what I felt, and what the people suffered, when I took my leave of them.

[*December* 28.—This afternoon an odd circumstance happened while I was preaching at the Height Chapel. A robin redbreast came twice and stood upon my head. Some of the congregation could not help smiling.

[*January* 19, 1784.—This day was spent at Hanging Heaton going about collecting subscriptions for the intended New House at Daw Green. I was astonished at the amazing liberality of this poor people. I collected £64 in that little village. If any one seeks proof of the work of God in this place, I appeal to the fruits. They received me in every house with love and good nature, and I was even obliged to stay the hand of some. If

anybody had entered the houses where I went they would not have supposed that £20 could have been raised.

[*June* 9.—I have been meeting the Hanging Heaton classes these two days past, and have had abundance of satisfaction in the people. They seem indeed to be in a prosperous way. I had the assistance of that amiable woman, Miss Elizabeth Ritchie, she questioning and advising the women. —*MS. Journal.*]

August 3.—This day our Conference at Leeds ended in much harmony and love. [We never saw so many preachers meet together before. A violent opposition was expected to be made by three or four mistaken brethren to the Deed of Settlement for a Conference subsequent to Mr. Wesley's death. Mr. Fletcher preached two awful sermons on the occasion, and took vast pains with the disaffected brethren, who at length made an humble submission, and all seemed harmony and love again. I think we never met nor parted with more love.—*MS. Journal.*] My appointment was for Bradford, only a few miles from the scenes of my former labours. But having a slight enlargement in my ankle indicating a scrofulous affection, my health required the use of sea-bathing; and on the next day I set out for Hartlepool, and preached at Ripon and Stockton in my way. I remained there about a fortnight, and often preached in the town and villages round about. The Lord graciously assisted me, and I hope my labours were not in vain.

26th.—This day I returned to my new circuit at

Bradford [which then comprised the three circuits of Bradford, Halifax, and Sowerby Bridge.] My first care was to lay the people before the Lord, and implore His presence and blessing; and here the Lord gave me a promise, and very encouraging tokens in my own soul, that He would, in a glorious manner, revive His work. Mr. John Shaw, my colleague in the Birstall Circuit, accompanied me to this place. He was a holy man, and a powerful preacher, and concurred in all my measures for the good of the work; though, from his very corpulent habit of body, he could not move out of his ordinary course.

28th.—Being at Elland, the first place at which I preached, my spirits were very low. At night, however, we had a good time, and a general blessing was poured on the people. Two or three were deeply affected, and wept much before the Lord. This I could not but regard as a pledge of future good.

In this new sphere of labour I continued preaching, and often holding prayer-meetings, till the beginning of October, when I was prevailed upon, by the advice of a physician, to cease from speaking, and for a time to retire from all public labours. I felt great regrets at this; as the fields already began to ripen for the harvest. I found afterwards that I had just retreated in time: had I gone on a few weeks longer, I had gone beyond the reach of medicine. My head and breast were sorely afflicted. I frequently lost my memory, and my understanding was often beclouded. In short, I was reduced so low that I

scarcely durst read a chapter in the family before prayer. At this juncture, I received a kind invitation from Brother and Sister Beecroft, of Kirkstall Forge, to make their house my home.

[It was on the first Sabbath that Mr. Valton came to Bradford, I had the pleasure to see and hear this man of God; and from the time that he knew me, he became my father and friend. His method of preaching very much resembled that of Mr Wesley. It was clear in ideas, earnest in address, and his word was often accompanied with such powerful strokes as reached the hearts of the people.]

After being a few weeks at the Forge, I yielded to the importunity of the people, and met the class; but even this small exertion brought on all my former pains, in such a degree, that I thought I should have died during the night. However, in the beginning of November, I returned to my circuit; for the people said they would excuse my preaching if I would reside among them. So I left my Kirkstall friends in tears; but was obliged to be silent in all for many months.

May 18, 1785.—For the last few months I have only ventured to pray and exhort, as the Lord gave me strength; and yet my word has been owned, much the same as if I had preached, in the conviction and conversion of several souls. But, alas! even these exertions occasion a return of all my former pains. I am therefore advised again to retire, and shall set out this morning for Scarborough.

June 25.—This day I returned to Bradford,

having found relief by bathing in the sea; but have preached several times in different places, and attended prayer-meetings; and the Lord has blessed my own soul and the souls of the people; to whom be glory for ever! Oh, that I might now spend and be spent in the service of souls, and of my blessed Redeemer! I long to see the dawning of the latter day. May the Lord hasten it in His time! Amen.

July 16.—Having arrived in London in order to attend the Conference [I dined at the New Chapel with Mr. Wesley, who seemed to be young and lusty as the eagle.—*MS.*], I consulted that pious and eminent physician, Dr. John Whitehead, on the infirmities under which I laboured in my breast. He advises me to give up morning preaching at five o'clock, and to preach but little in the evenings. But my honoured and much-esteemed friend, Mr. Fletcher, gives me advice of another kind; namely, to follow his example, and look out for a suitable companion to nurse me in the retreat, and under the infirmities of life. That, however, must be a subject of prayer.

[*August* 3.—This morning we concluded the Conference with the sacrament. We had a very loving time, and parted with much affection. One thing I believe many of us remarked, that our London friends discovered more love to the preachers that lodged in their houses than I ever remembered, and expressed great marks of sorrow at parting with us. One thing more was remarkable—we have had a larger increase[1] this

[1] The numbers were 70,466, an increase of 6,309.

year, both in England and America, than we have had this many years.—*MS. Journal.*]

August 5.—To-day I set out a second time for the Bradford Circuit. Oh that the presence of God might accompany me in His word and work among that people! On arriving safe, I can say that the Lord has accompanied me. He gave me great power and success at several places where I preached, and souls were brought to God.

23rd.—By the advice of physicians I am again obliged to leave my circuit, and go to the sea: the salt water being beneficial to a scorbutic complaint with which I am afflicted. I spent a fortnight at Bridlington, and at the Quay. At both these places I preached several times; and it may be that the bread cast on the waters shall be found after many days.

September 9.—My dear friend, Mr. Coulson, of Scarborough, met me to-day at Wold Newton, and took me to his house, where I continued almost every night to be engaged in preaching or exhortation: and God was pleased to own my poor labours; to whom be glory for ever! On the 15th I preached a funeral sermon on the death of Captain James Smith, a young man not quite twenty-one. I think I never saw so neat, attentive, and serious a congregation before. They were almost all in tears; and the young people in particular were deeply affected. It was indeed a very solemn occasion.

October 1.—This day I arrived safe at Bradford, having been accompanied part of the way by my dear friend, Mr. Coulson; and preached at Malton,

York, &c., on my return. I find my health much improved, and hope to devote my new acquisition of strength wholly to the glory of God.

In opening the new chapel at Wichfield, half-way between Bradford and Halifax, we had a very serious alarm by the breaking of an old bench. It was some time before the noise and terror subsided. As not half the crowd could get in, I took occasion to preach out of doors; and was happy to remark that the whole could hear the word, and the divine blessing implored on the assembled multitude.

[*November* 14.—This morning Dr. Coke proposed me for ordination next Conference. I cannot tell what to think of it. I then declined it, but shall give up myself to prayer.—*MS. Journal.*]

At the close of this year I can give but a summary of my labours in the Lord. They have been much the same in the Birstall Circuit, only my declining state of health did not allow me to hold many watch-nights. I have therefore bowed to the divine restraints, and held frequent prayer-meetings after preaching, and been favoured with the power of the Holy Ghost. In these exercises many souls have been converted during the last two years, and several hundreds added to the different societies. The thorn in the flesh has checked the ardours of my mind. The sharp returns of pain in my breast and head, accompanied with dizziness in the pulpit, have often obliged me to hold myself by the desk, to keep me from falling down. Sometimes, indeed, I must have declined the work altogether, had not

the rides in this circuit been short, and had I not been favoured with many vacant nights.

[In addition to what Mr. Valton states here, I have to add, that in lovefeasts, and on other occasions, he held fast the confidence of the pure and perfect love of God. He pressed this liberty more or less in most of his sermons, in the society meetings, and in visiting the classes. In discipline, he was a pattern of paternal vigilance and care. He would not allow any member to lend a ticket to other persons to enable them to obtain admission into the lovefeasts; as this was silently telling the stewards at the door a double lie—'This is my name; I am in the society.' A man from the country had bought a cake for his child on the Sabbath Day: the circumstance having reached Mr. Valton's ears, in renewing the tickets, he required him to promise not to do it again; which not being complied with, he tore the ticket. To rich men who prospered in trade, and conformed to the world, his voice was often strong: he menaced them with the loss of their souls. I once saw an opulent friend come out of the chapel, very much moved by what he had just heard. Mr. V., however, got well over those difficulties, because the offended soon knew that he practised the duties of charity which he pressed upon others.]

July 19.—Having taken my leave of the dear people in my circuit on the 3rd of this month, I proceeded, by easy rides, to the Bristol Conference, preaching almost every night among my old friends. On some occasions the Lord

favoured me with remarkable enlargement, both in prayer and in preaching.

August 1.—This day our Conference closed[1]; and, by an overruling Providence, I was appointed assistant (we now say superintendent) of the Bristol Circuit; and yet with the grace to be a supernumerary, which indulgently allowed me to preach just as much as I was able.

[Mr. Valton, when in the Bristol Circuit, eight years before, had found the kindest of Christian friends in Mr. and Mrs. Purnel, who lived at the Fort. They had also a country house at Almondsbury, seven miles north of Bristol. Mr. Purnel was now dead, and the family had, in consequence of considerable losses in mercantile life, laid aside their carriage. The widow now lived entirely at Almondsbury, with a view to foster the infant cause in that parish. She and Miss Johnson,[2] and Mrs. Wait,[3] of Belton, were reckoned three of the most pious women among the Methodists in the West of England. Of the connexion that follows, Mr. Valton writes:]

It was now that a correspondence was begun between me and Mrs. Purnel; in which procedure I met with the concurrence of Messrs. John and Charles Wesley. Mr. Charles, then living in

[1] He stayed with Brother Thomas Gadd in the Castle Green. He says, 'It was (I thought) the most uncomfortable Conference that I have been at. I thought we were less serious and governable than I had ever observed.'

[2] Wesley tells R. C. Brackenbury, 'I am persuaded you will profit as much, if not more, by the conversation of a few in Bristol, Mr. Valton and Miss Johnson in particular as by that of any persons in Great Britain.'—Nov. 7, 1788 (*Works* xiii. 8).

[3] See Wesley Historical Society's *Proceedings*, vol. vi., p. 130.

Bristol, cordially approved, as did also the particular circle of our religious friends. After receiving the approbation of Mr. Wesley and a few select friends, I wrote to her, proposing marriage, and retired to Brean, a very lonely place, within a hundred yards of the sea. Here I gave myself up anew to the Lord, and cannot but adore and praise my Lord who directed me to so retired a place. I know not where I could have found so agreeable a situation for health and solitude. Here I was much engaged in prayer, and my God was with me. I deprecated all the sins of my single life, and cried to God to interpose with regard to the issues of my letter. I particularly implored an increase of His Holy Spirit, and that I might return to the labours of the circuit with strength renewed. Many weeping and happy times I had; and, I believe, my soul sunk into a deeper state of pure and humble love than I had enjoyed for some years past. The day on which I left Brean, while walking on the sea-shore, I entered into a most solemn covenant with the Lord. I repeatedly, and with my whole heart, avouched the Lord to be my God, and my portion for ever. I found myself perfectly free from all creatures, sensible that all my riches, honours, and blessedness must come from Him. My soul did indeed rejoice in the God of my salvation; whose name be blessed for ever!

September 30.—This day Mrs. P. gave her full consent to marry me.[1] On this subject we have

[1] Whilst under the doctor's hand John Fletcher wrote him 'a consoling letter. He therein told me, he thought a nurse, in the

both had severe trials; but a kind Providence seems to have cleared our way.

Wednesday, December 1, 1786.—This memorable day I received the hand of Judith Purnel at the altar in St. James's Church, Bristol. It was a solemn time, and God was present with us. The Lord gave me courage to behave as became the occasion. My grateful heart said, 'Surely I have not been a petitioner in vain at the throne of grace.' Such a pious and suitable person, in all respects, I do not know where else I could have found. While I was able to keep a circuit, I sought not for a wife; being determined to have full freedom in serving the church. But now, being disabled, I have sought and found a faithful companion for the retreat of life. Just before I went to church, I fell on my knees, and entreated the Lord for a blessing. I could appeal to Him that I made His will my law; and could then have given her up, had it been His pleasure. These words were applied with power to my mind, 'Go, and I will bless thee.' Lord, be it so! My soul embraced the promise, 'My presence shall go with thee.' It is enough, enough, O my God! And now, I beseech Thee, O Lord, fulfil Thy gracious word; and let Thy presence attend us in all the walks of life! Keep us ever humble, loving, and simple, at Thy feet; and make us truly helpful to each other, that we

quality of a wife, might be a blessing to me, and hinted to Mrs. Purnel, who, with Miss Johnson, had, some time before, been a tender nurse to him.' This led Valton to propose.—*Arminian Magazine*, 1794, p. 143.

may meet at last where pain and parting shall be no more![1]

July 2, 1787.—I this day closed my year of labours in the Bristol Circuit. The superintendency did not obstruct my going to visit new places. I took in Thornbury, and several villages, forming classes in every place. In the city of Bristol also we had a clear increase of one hundred members; and between one and two hundred souls found peace with God. The people truly live in my heart; and I can rejoice to waste my life away in doing them service. I preached on the road at several places, and had remarkable times: several were convinced of sin, and some found peace with God. At two or three of the places persons were heard crying aloud for mercy. Glory for ever be ascribed to Thee, O Lord!

August 18.—This day I reached home from the Manchester Conference. [Being a new thing[2] at this town, the holding of a Conference, I expected the sight of so many preachers would excite the scorn of the people, but it was quite the reverse. The society received us with much cordiality, and the town in general expressed nothing but respect. —*MS.*] Mr. Wesley having been so kind as to ease me of the duties of superintending the circuit, I shall be at liberty to comply with invitations from the country, and to visit the villages.

[1] Wesley wrote him an affectionate letter, December 22, 1786, requiring for a month, 'not to preach more than twice a week; and if you preach less, I will not blame you. . . . Pray do as much as you can, and do not attempt to do more, or you will very soon do nothing' (*Works*, xii, 490).

[2] It met in Manchester in 1765.

Some time in October, by desire of Mr. and Mrs. Goodfellow, I visited Ditcheat, where the Lord much blessed the word to the hearers. Some, from that night, were awakened, and brought into the society.

I had promised on my return to visit Shepton Mallet, and give them a sermon on the following Sabbath, in the evening. Having had a very disagreeable representation of the state of religion in that town, I felt my spirits low, and experienced much depression as I was riding thither. But a text was forcibly brought to my mind (Isa. liv. 1, 2): 'Sing, O barren,' &c. I thanked the Lord; and, finding the congregation large, ventured to read the words which had been given to me on the road. Many, I perceived, were affected, and wept bitterly under the word. I met the society; but the crowd stayed behind, and I thought more than once that we should have had a general cry. When I came down from the pulpit, I found many in great distress, and could not leave them without prayer. Mr. Coulson, an aged class-leader, told me afterwards that he believed about one hundred persons were more or less awakened under that discourse.

In the beginning of November I spent two or three nights more with that people; and many seemed truly convinced, and in earnest for salvation. The mornings I spent at my lodgings, to receive and advise those who came in distress, inquiring what they must do to be saved. The congregations increased every night, and a general spirit of alarm and inquiry was spread through the town and neighbourhood. That week many found

peace, and forty-four were admitted on trial into the society. How soon did the Lord fulfil the gracious words given me for a text, 'Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear!' &c.

In my next visit I had another wonderful night, and returned thanks for about twenty-two that had lately found peace with God. The preachers in the circuit had fostered and encouraged the work. I may truly say, I never saw such a general awakening, and without the least appearance of wild fire. One morning I think not less than twenty came to my chamber in distress, and two of them found peace with God. Among the many who were convinced and converted in this revival was a very intelligent-looking boy, deaf and dumb, who stood up in the lovefeast, and by signs, which others interpreted, expressed how happy he was in God.

On the last day of this year, I preached again at Ditcheat, to a crowded auditory; and God sent the word to the hearts of many. We continued the services till near midnight. Three that were near me were in great distress, especially a young man that was born without arms. He had been a notorious sinner, and was wonderful in the use of his teeth and feet. This youth roared aloud for the disquietude of his soul.

In one of my former visits to Ditcheat, a woman who had been awakened desired her husband to come and hear me. 'No,' said he, 'I would rather go to hell than hear the Methodists.' He was presently after seized with a pain in his side, took to his bed, and died in a few days. One of

our friends visited him, and proposed prayer. 'No,' said he, 'it is too late. You should have come before.' In a little while he was heard to exclaim, 'What, is it for ever! for ever!' and presently died.

July 13, 1788.—This day I set out for the London Conference, having finished my second year at Bristol; my first care being to thank the Lord for the success with which He has favoured me in the past year. About one hundred members have been added in Shepton Mallet, and the chapel has been considerably enlarged.

[About this time, the case of George Lukins attracted considerable notice in Bristol, and in all the public papers. I personally knew him; a youth about eighteen, short in stature, and meagre in aspect. He had frequent fits or paroxysms in which he was cruelly distorted, and uttered foul language; but was often heard to say that he should be delivered if seven ministers should pray with him. His words at length attracted notice, and the Rev. Mr. Easterbrook, Vicar of Temple Church, collected that number to pray with Lukins in the vestry, and see what the Lord would do. They were gentlemen of superior education, and able ministers. Suffice to say, after the prayers of that morning, Lukins had no more of those horrid distortions, but was employed by Mr. R. Edwards and others as a bill-sticker. Mr. Easterbrook published a plain narrative of the case, an extract of which was published by Mr. Wesley in his Magazine.[1] Mr. Valton writes:]

[1] *Arminian Magazine*, 1789, p. 155.

Some time ago I had a letter requesting me to make one of the seven ministers to pray over George Lukins. I cried out before God, 'Lord, I am not fit for such a work; I have not faith to encounter a demoniac.' It was powerfully applied, 'Go in this thy might.' The day before we were to meet, I went to see Lukins, and found such faith that I could then encounter the seven devils which he said tormented him. I did not doubt but deliverance would come. Suffice to say, when we met, the Lord heard prayer, and delivered the poor man.

April 22.—At Lady-day I was providentially removed from Almondsbury to a house adjacent to St. George's Church at Kingswood; a central abode to a little sphere of labour. Here we fitted up the best part of the house for a chapel; a beautiful large room, comfortable and commodious. We have preaching every Tuesday, and Mrs. Valton meets a class: thus, through mercy, good has already been done. I would gladly infer that it is the earnest of a much greater work. My chief infirmities during the year have been a vertigo in my head, and an old infirmity in my ankle. If I walk much, it sometimes deprives me of sleep at night. Glory be to God that He does not quite lay me aside.

July 6, 1789.—I this day set out for the Leeds Conference. My bodily infirmities still continue, especially in my ankle; so that now I can walk but little. Sometimes the loss of memory in the pulpit has obliged me to stop, and I have been ready to fall down. Under all my weaknesses, the

Lord still blesses my word in the conviction and conversion of souls.

August 5.—This day our Conference ended at Leeds. We had a very brotherly and affectionate Conference, and seemed perfectly united one to another. I still remained a supernumerary, being unable to resume the labours of a circuit.

While at Leeds I consulted the good Dr. James Hamilton [who afterwards removed to practice in London] on my infirmities. He, as others, advised me to go to Scarborough. I did so, and was comfortably entertained at my old friend's, Mr. Coulson's; whom I now found actively engaged for God as a leader and circuit-steward. I received benefit from bathing and drinking the water, and preached in the town and villages; but think the people were not so lively as before.

September 16.—I this day arrived safe at home, and felt much thankfulness to God. On my journey, I was much assisted while preaching at York, Leeds, and other places. To God be praise and glory for ever! Amen.

On making my estimate towards the close of the year, I feel grateful that the Lord does not take His word from my lips. Though I cannot take a circuit, through infirmities, yet in general I am enabled to preach about twenty times in a month; often indeed with much pain and difficulty. I bless the Lord that my heart is still in the work; I cannot forget the former days; and, if it were in my power, I would again go forth into the full work of saving souls. But known unto my God are the painful nights that I frequently have,

as well as wearisome days. But all is for good. The Lord cannot err; nor can I choose. Glory be to His name for ever!

Mr. Sutcliffe adds: Mr. Valton did not write much in later years; and the greater part of what he wrote relates to places and texts.

May 11, 1790.—He opened the new chapel at Trowbridge,[1] while I took his place in Bristol. On my return, I found the most grateful sentiments that so blessed a man had been sent amongst them. In the chamber at Mr. Knapp's, where the preachers lodged, was a Bible placed for their use. On the blank leaf, between the Old and the New Testament, I found in Mr. Valton's own hand three texts: Jer. xlviii. 10; Jer. vi. 8; and Gen. vi. 3.

At the Bristol Conference, 1790,[2] Mr. Richard Andrews, of Redruth, having come on some Cornish affairs, Mr. Valton was requested, as indeed he had often been desired before, to spend

[1] 'On the bridge.' See Wesley Historical Society's *Proceedings*, vol. vi., p. 115. Valton, in his MS. Journal, gives the date of opening as May 2.

[2] In his MS. Journal Valton writes of this Conference as follows: '4 *August*.—This evening our Conference ended. I cannot but observe we had the greatest harmony and good-nature together, and I believe the Lord was with us indeed. Glory be to His holy Name! One evening this week we continued in prayer after Mr. Wesley had done his sermon. . . . Most of the evenings during Conference I visited the sick. One woman and a young girl were both dying in a consumption. At first their case was dismal, but at last I left them in a comfortable situation. Without any solicitation, Mr. Wesley was pleased to appoint me again Supernumerary in the Bristol Circuit. . . .'

a little time among the generous-hearted people of that county. The visit was very refreshing both to them and to him. The ground was new, and it seemed as if he could hardly leave it.

We find him making excursions for twelve or fourteen miles from home, to Bath, Paulton, Clutton, Pensford, &c. To Nailsea he often went. The Rev. Mr. Baddily and he were very intimate. This clergyman received the preachers, and attended the Bristol Conference. He and Dr. Coke gave us the sacrament at the close of the Conference, in 1790; Mr. Wesley, being fatigued, received the elements as the officiating ministers trod among the crowd. In 1791 and 1792, we find Mr. Valton paying his annual visit to his Gloucester and Worcester friends.

While I was stationed in the West of England, I called two or three times to see him, and generally found him in apparent health and good spirits. He had learned to bear the thorn in the flesh with silent meekness. The last time I called was perhaps eight months before he died. Mrs. Valton now told me what I had no idea of before, that he sometimes lay for whole nights sleepless and sweating with anguish and pain, from a carious ankle. When he came into the parlour, he looked only a little impaired in his face, but was still able to preach. He seemed to regret a want of resolution to suffer amputation. The pains meanwhile superinduced a fever, which gradually consumed a good constitution. So silent and secret were his sufferings that I did not hear of immediate danger till I heard of his death.

His dear wife, running a race, as it were, to the tomb with her husband, died a happy death on November 16, 1793.[1] No notes were taken of his last moments, except general testimonies of his faith and love, patience and resignation. From brother Viner, steward of the Portland Chapel in Bristol, I gained the most satisfactory intelligence. Hearing that his exit was near, he went over to see him, and saw a glorious sight—a dying worm as happy as grace could make him on earth. 'Brother,' said he, 'my soul for the last four days has been in a state of inward glory.' So John Valton, of blessed memory in the church, fell asleep in the Lord, on March 23, 1794.

[1] See his 'Short Account' of her in the *Arminian Magazine*, 1794, p. 141.

THOMAS RANKIN[1]

In the year 1778 I wrote a short and imperfect account of my life in a letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, which was published in the *Arminian Magazine*, in the year 1779. Since that period I have resolved to enlarge that account, by continuing it down to the present time.

I was born at Dunbar, in the shire of East Lothian. My parents feared God, and endeavoured to bring up their children in His fear; all of whom, except two daughters and myself, died young. We were early taught the principles of religion. My father used frequently in the evenings to catechize us, as also the servants. At school we were taught in the same way. By these means the fear of God was early implanted in my mind, so as to make me afraid of doing what other boys did without either fear or shame. While at school I paid close attention to my learning, and made some progress. After a season, I desired my father to let me learn arithmetic; and, this kind of learning being congenial to my turn of mind, I advanced as far in all the different branches as my master was capable of teaching me. I can say very little about religious impressions while at school; only I remember that I loved to hear persons converse about

[1] From the *Methodist Magazine*, 1811, p. 561.

religion, and to be in their company. At times I used private prayer, especially when the thoughts of death and judgement came into my mind. When about eleven or twelve years of age I was deeply affected at a sacramental occasion, being permitted to stay at the administration of the ordinance. When I saw the ministers and people receive the bread and wine, and heard the address from the former to the communicants, I frequently burst into tears. At the same time I thought, 'If ever I live to be a man, I will be a minister; for surely if any persons go to heaven, it must be the ministers of the gospel.' Those impressions often remained for days upon my mind, and led me to reading and private prayer. I believe it was about this time that there was a most tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, such as some of the oldest people had never seen before. This being in the night season made the awful scene more terrible. My sisters, with myself, cried, and prayed, and were in the utmost terror of mind. This solemn night made a deep impression upon me, and led me to prayer. The remarks my father made upon it served also to fix upon my mind the great importance of being prepared for death and judgement. It was about this time that my father had me taught music and dancing. I soon found that these things had a fatal tendency to obliterate the good impressions which from time to time I had found my mind affected with. Parents and guardians of youth are not sufficiently aware how soon young minds are ensnared and contaminated with

what are called 'genteel accomplishments.' To such as have no savour of divine things, the above remark may appear trifling, and they may sneer at it; but I aver that young people are in the utmost danger from dancing and music; and I have often been astonished that any parents professing godliness should suffer their own children to be taught these things, or turn advocates for them in others. I repeat once more, that a dancing-school, unless conducted by a very peculiar master, who watches over the youth entrusted to him, will soon pave the way for such scenes as both parents and children (if the grace of God do not prevent) will have cause to mourn over when too late.

In the midst of these trifling amusements the Lord in mercy did not leave me to the depravity and vanity of my own corrupted heart. I was now thirteen years of age, full of vivacity, with good health, and a remarkable flow of spirits. I had an extraordinary dream, which made a very deep impression on my mind, the effects of which remained for a season. I dreamed that I was with some of my schoolfellows in a place which was open to the east, and I was looking towards the skies in that quarter, when all on a sudden the heavens were in a strange commotion; and soon after there appeared large balls of fire, flying from one end of the hemisphere to the other. I called upon my schoolfellows to behold the awful sight; and, while I was speaking to them, some of the balls of fire fell on the earth, and came very near us. We all then ran for our lives, with the balls

of fire flying all around us; when, at last, I thought I got into a house, and felt as if I was secured from all danger. Soon after this I awoke in great agitation, but thankful it was only a dream, and not what I imagined in my sleep—the day of judgement.

The force of education, and a fear of my father, who was very severe in the government of his children, preserved me from many youthful follies, and from sin, both in word and deed. My constitutional sin was a proneness to anger when offended. I do not recollect that I ever began a quarrel with my schoolfellows, as I always dreaded my father's resentment, and the reproof, if not the chastisement, of my schoolmaster. But if I was affronted, my passion rose so high that I regarded no consequences. The moment my passion subsided, I was ashamed and condemned in my conscience; and often resolved I would never be in a passion any more. The terror I was in lest it should come to my father's ears, made me always ready to make up matters with the boys. He saw in me too much of his own disposition; and as he had suffered for it in his own mind, he was the more careful to guard me against its pernicious effects. Such was his strength of body, and undaunted courage of mind, that at the time of the rebellion, in the year 1745 (when I was turned seven years old), he offered to head a party of his townsmen, in order to attack a party of the rebels, who came to Dunbar for the sake of plunder He had such love to His Majesty and to our happy con-

stitution that he was ready to spill his blood in the defence of both. I have heard him say, when he laid the matter before the provost and principal men of the town, if they would have consented, and allowed him the townsmen he would have chosen, he would have secured all the plunder the rebels had taken, and made an end of the detachment.

When I was between sixteen and seventeen years of age, my father, after an illness of some months, died in peace. For some time after his death, my mind was seriously and deeply affected; but, alas! youthful company and trifling amusements gradually drew my mind from the pursuit of those things that made for my present and eternal happiness. I heard my father's advice no more; and the awe in which I stood of him being removed by his death, I indulged myself in greater liberties than I durst have done during his life. I began to be more fond of music and dancing; and this led me into vain company, and meetings of young people of both sexes. My mother was too indulgent and fond of me (as she never had any other son but myself), and this made her authority but very light over me. I bless God that I was mercifully preserved from open wickedness. I do not know that ever I swore an oath in my life; indeed, I felt an entire abhorrence to this vice, and I also detested it in others.

Soon after this, a troop of dragoons came to Dunbar; among whom there were ten or twelve pious men, with several of their wives. As soon

as they were settled in the place, they hired a room, and met together for prayer and hearing the Word of God every morning and evening. I did not know then, but I have been informed since, that those men were part of the religious soldiers who used to meet with John Haime and others in Germany. The news of soldiers meeting for prayer and praise, and reading the Word of God, soon spread through the town: curiosity led many to attend their meetings, and I was one of that number. After a few weeks, some persons had divine impressions made upon them: the place would scarcely contain the numbers that attended; and it pleased God to make their conversation and prayers a real blessing to several souls. It was not long before several were enabled to testify that they had redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of all their sins. This soon spread abroad, and made a great noise in the town. As I loved their conversation and prayers, and continued to attend their meetings, I wished to have some conversation with them, that I might know what they meant by knowing their sins forgiven. I met with them and others; but I could not understand them when they spoke of God's Spirit bearing witness with their spirits that they were the children of God. They urged every scripture that occurred to their minds to prove their point; but my plea was, 'that we might be in the favour of God, and not be assured that our sins were forgiven.' I granted, 'that some very peculiar holy people might be assured of the divine favour; but that

it was not the privilege of all the children of God.' This, I thought, was supported by Scripture, and the experience of some whose lives I had read; as also confirmed by the conversation of others, who, I thought, were the most pious persons in Dunbar. I believed the soldiers meant well, but that they were grossly mistaken. Their number, however, increased, and the persecution of the tongue increased also; so that some who had been respectable characters had their names cast out as evil. I could not bear this, and determined not to frequent their meetings as I had done before. It was about this time that some of the Methodist preachers came from Newcastle and preached at Dunbar. This also being a new thing, many went to hear them, and I attended among the rest. I was pleased with all I heard; but I do not remember that any particular impression was made upon my mind. After several of the preachers had paid a visit to the place, and many approved of them, Mr. William Darney came and preached also. His manner was such as gave a general disgust to many of the inhabitants; and, young as I was, I joined the number. I thought I never heard such nonsense, and such preaching about hell and damnation, from any minister in all my life.

About this time I was invited to the wedding of a farmer's daughter, whose family were intimate with my father while he lived, and the intimacy continued with my mother and myself after his death. I accordingly went, and, as usual, joined in the amusements of the day. After I had

danced several times, and was now engaged in a country dance, I was overwhelmed with such dread of mind, that, as soon as it was concluded I walked out into the fields (being in summer), and felt distressed beyond measure. Several came out in search of me; and when they found me, most earnestly entreated that I would go in and join the dance once more. My answer was, 'No, I will dance no more this day; and I believe I never shall dance more while I live.' They asked if I were well. I replied, I was; but was determined that no entreaties should make me alter my resolution. I thank God that I have been enabled to keep my word to the present day.

It pleased God to carry on the work of His grace in the souls of those in whom it was begun, and their number increased; so that a society was formed, and class-meetings were established. At that time I did not understand the nature of class-meetings; and therefore was ready to listen to the idle and foolish talking of those who said, 'The soldiers had pardoned such and such a one, after they had confessed their sins to them.' The ministers of the town had also begun to say several things from the pulpit, as well as in private, that were unfriendly to the meetings of the soldiers, and those who assembled with them. This was attended with unpleasant circumstances, and made several afraid to go to their meetings. While things were in this situation, I had occasion to call upon one who was joined to the society. She was a woman of good sense, and amiable in her manners, and had known me from a child.

After the business was settled that I went about, she accosted me in a most kind and pleasing manner, by telling me she had not seen me for some time at their meetings, and asked me the reasons why I absented myself. I made a very improper excuse. I wanted to be gone; for I felt her words to make a deep impression on my mind, and the force of truth made me very uneasy. The effects of this short conversation rested upon my mind for some time, as also the conversation of others who were members of the society. The short of the matter was this: I had a sincere desire to serve God and to save my soul, as also to be thought a religious young man; but I had not learned to 'sell all for the pearl of great price.' I still wanted to mingle harmless amusements with the things of God; and therefore I halted between two opinions, and trimmed between the world and the glorious liberty of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I now resolved to leave home, though much against my mother's will. I told her I could no longer bear to attend to that part of the business which obliged me to attend the public-houses to settle accounts with our customers. In short, I came to a determination to spend some time at Leith, two miles from Edinburgh. I had now an opportunity of sitting under the ministry of that pious preacher, Mr. Lindsay, of North Leith. His sermons were greatly blessed to me, and I began to see the plan of salvation with more clearness than ever I had done before. I had an uncle who lived in Edinburgh; and when I went

to visit him, I had also an opportunity of hearing several excellent ministers preach the gospel. These opportunities were not lost; but still I remained an entire stranger to the knowledge of salvation by the remission of my sins. I went on in this manner for some months, till the sacrament was going to be administered, when I determined, for the first time, to go to the Lord's table. I waited on the minister with one of the elders, with whom I was acquainted. He proposed the usual questions to me previous to my admission to the ordinance. I replied as well as I could, and told him I had a sincere desire to love God, and walk in His commandments. I received the token, and attended on the sacrament accordingly. The sermons, exhortations at the table, and the administration of the ordinance, were attended with a peculiar solemnity, and greatly blessed to my soul. I found such a happiness as I never had known before. This continued for some weeks, and I could truly say that private prayer and reading the Word of God were my delight.

It was about this time that I first heard that eminent servant of the Lord Jesus, Mr. George Whitefield. He was preaching his farewell sermon in the Orphan House yard, in Edinburgh.[1] I had often before had thoughts of hearing him; but so many things had been said to me of him that I was afraid I should be deceived. I heard him

[1] In June, 1757. Whitefield remained in Edinburgh nearly a month, and preached fifty times, to 'thousands and thousands.'—Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, vol. ii. p. 393–4.

with wonder and surprise, and had such a discovery of the plan of salvation as I had never known before. I was astonished at myself that I should have listened to those idle tales, and thereby have been kept from hearing this burning and shining light, who had been instrumental in the hands of God for the good of so many thousands of souls. When I understood he was going to leave Edinburgh, I was really distressed. I remembered more of that sermon than of all the sermons I ever had heard; and had a discovery of the unsearchable riches of the grace of God in Christ Jesus; as also how a lost sinner was to come to God, and obtain mercy through the Redeemer. From this time I was truly convinced of the necessity of a change of heart. I now sought the knowledge of salvation with my whole heart; and the measure of happiness which I had for some time experienced made me to think I was in the divine favour. I most sincerely desired to devote my soul and body to the glory of God; when I was all on a sudden left in darkness. I began to examine myself, if I had given way to any known sin, or neglected any known duty. So far as I had light to discern, I knew not that I had done anything to cause the amazing change I now experienced. I was indeed very unhappy, and the following lines describe my feelings at that time:

> Driven out from my God, I wander abroad;
> Through a desert of sorrows I rove.

What to do, or where to go, I could not tell I

thought, 'The way of duty is the way of safety, and here will I hold.' I was greatly tempted to believe that all the happiness I had experienced was an entire delusion. Whether from pride or prudence I cannot say, but I remained silent, and my sufferings were not small. The Lord well knew that it was not a little that would break a headstrong will, and bow a high and proud spirit; and therefore I had cup after cup given me to drink, in order to embitter everything that had opposed, or might oppose, my salvation by grace alone. I mingled my food with weeping, and my complaints with groans that could not be uttered. 'I bless Thee for the most severe; and let this stand the foremost, that my heart has bled.'

The time was now drawing near for the sacrament to be administered again; and when I thought of going to the table of the Lord, I was seized with extreme distress. After many painful reasonings, I thought, 'Where can I go for ease to my wounded spirit but to Jesus the sinners' Friend?' I determined, 'If I perish, I w ll perish crying out for mercy.' On the Sunday morning I was early at church, waiting upon God in His public ordinances. The subject preached upon was Heb. xii. 24; and the sermon was delivered with many tears and much power from on high. I had often heard Mr. Lindsay with much profit and pleasure, but never before felt what I did under this sermon. My heart was broken to pieces, and now it was that I had a strong hope that the Lord would reveal His love to my

heart. I went to the table, and received the bread with a broken, melting, and expectant heart. When the wine was delivered into my hand, the cup being full, a little was spilt on the floor; and that very moment Satan suggested that 'Christ's blood was spilt for me in vain!' I scarcely knew how I got the cup to my lips, or how I delivered it to the next person, according to custom. The horror of mind that seized me was inexpressible, and the violence of the temptation continued for several hours. All my pleasing hopes of pardon and peace passed away as a dream. As soon as I got home, I wrestled with God in mighty prayer; but all was dark. Towards the evening a ray of light darted across the dreadful gloom; and hope, with its cheering rays, began to spring up in my soul. I then saw that the dreadful suggestion that Christ's blood was spilt for me in vain was only a strong temptation from the powers of darkness. Hopes and fears alternately prevailed, and thus I went on for several weeks.

While I was in this state of mind, I was informed that Mr. Whitefield was expected to preach in the Orphan House yard next Lord's day. I heard him every time he preached the ensuing week, both evening and morning. Oh, how precious was the word to my soul! It was sweeter than honey, or the honeycomb. My expectations of divine mercy rose superior to all my fears. I heard him at every opportunity, till he went to visit Glasgow, and other parts in the west of Scotland. I now saw as well as felt, that I had nothing to do but to come to God, through

the Son of His love, and by faith to lay hold on the horns of the altar. I was now led to pray and expect every day and every hour, the moment would arrive when I might say, without a doubt, 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His!' Oh, yes! 'My soul broke forth in strong desires the perfect bliss to prove.' Sometimes I thought I was not ready to lay hold on eternal life. At last I began to reason thus: 'Why are His chariot-wheels long in coming?' It then was suggested to me, 'Probably you are not one of the elect; and you may seek, and seek in vain.' I tasted no pleasant food, my sleep departed from me, and my flesh wasted from my bones; till at last I sunk into despair. One morning, after breakfast, I arose and went into the garden, and sat down in a retired place, to mourn over my sad condition. I began to wrestle with God in an agony of prayer. I called out, 'Lord, I have wrestled long, and have not yet prevailed: Oh, let me now prevail!' The whole passage of Jacob's wrestling with the Angel came into my mind; and I called out aloud, 'I will not let Thee go, unless Thou bless me!' In a moment the cloud burst, and tears of love flowed from my eyes; when these words were applied to my soul, many times over, 'And he blessed him there.' They came with the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance; and my whole soul was overwhelmed with the presence of God. Every doubt of my acceptance was now gone, and all my fears fled away as the morning shades before the rising sun. I had the most distinct testimony that all my sins were forgiven

through the blood of the covenant, and that I was a child of God, and an heir of eternal glory. What I now felt was very different from what I had experienced of the drawings of the love of God for several years past, and when I first partook of the sacrament. I had now no more doubt of my interest in the Lord Jesus Christ than of my own existence. I could declare that the Son of Man had still power on earth to forgive sins; and that He had pardoned my sins, even mine. Now it was that

> Jesus all the day long
> Was my joy and my song!

And the cry of my soul was,

> Oh that all His salvation might see!
> He has loved me, I cried,
> He has suffered and died
> To redeem such a rebel as me!

How many times before, when under the most painful distress of mind, I had wished I had never been born! But now I could bless God that I ever had a being, and fully believed that I should live with God while eternal ages roll. Soon after, I was sent for by a lady, who, observing that I had been in tears, inquired what was the matter. I told her they were not tears of sorrow, they were tears of joy; and then related to her what the Lord had done for my soul. She burst into tears herself, and told me she had been seeking that great blessing for years, but had not found it. She was so deeply affected with what I had told her, and by the power that attended the word, that

it was some time before she could inform me of the business she wished to consult me upon. I have reason to believe it was made an eternal blessing to her soul. As soon as I had finished a little writing which she wanted me to do for her, I went to prayer with her, and left her in tears. I could now look back, and survey the dealings of God with me, even from my childhood; and understood a little of that scripture, 'When the Comforter is come, He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' Those words were truly fulfilled in me, 'I have girded him, although he has not known Me.' How many times did I taste of His love, and how sweetly did the Lord draw me by the cords thereof. But youthful vanities and youthful company choked the good seed. Now I saw why it was that the Lord laid His hand so heavily on my soul, and gave me to feel so keenly the distress of a wounded spirit. This embittered every creature and created thing to my mind, and made me completely willing to sell all for the pearl of great price. In a word, everything, the nearest and dearest connexions on earth, became entirely and totally indifferent to me, when they stood in opposition to the salvation of my soul. I was enabled to give up all, and I found all in my adorable Lord and Saviour.

I now embraced an opportunity of writing to one of the young men belonging to the society in Dunbar, with whom I had had many disputes upon religious topics, and informed him what God had done for my soul. This soon spread through

all the society, and afforded matter of praise to God in my behalf; but to others it was only, 'Mr. Whitefield has made him religiously mad!' This was no more than I expected; and when it came to my ears, it gave me very little trouble. But I felt some concern when I was informed that my mother, whom I sincerely loved, and sisters, were very much distressed on my account. But the providence of God soon took care for this also. I had paid very little attention to my body, so that my health had suffered, till I was not able to attend to my business, and had all the appearance of a rapid consumption. The doctor, who had given me some medicines, and found I grew worse, advised me to remove to my native air. I did so; and when I came to Dunbar, my mother and sisters were in great distress to see me so reduced that walking a hundred yards would tire me. By the use of some simple and efficacious medicines, and the benefit of my native air, after the first week, I gained strength every day; so that in six weeks' time, by the blessing of God, I was restored to my former health and strength. About ten or twelve days after I came to Dunbar, as I knew that many things were said to the minister of the parish concerning me, I waited upon him. He had known me from a child, and he was well acquainted with my parents. As soon as he was informed that I was in the house, he sent for me into his study, and desired me to take a seat opposite to him. After a few words about my health, I told him, that I supposed he had heard a variety of things concerning me. He

replied, he had, and wished to converse with me himself about those things. I told him I was come on purpose; and then in all simplicity and godly sincerity informed him of my experience, and boldly declared what the Lord had done for my soul. He heard me with great attention, and when I had done, gave me several friendly counsels; he then arose from his seat, with tears in his eyes, and put his right hand on my head, and said, 'My dear Tommy, I always loved you from a child, and I now love you more than ever; may God bless you, and keep you, and make you a blessing in your day and generation!' After he had done, I thanked him, and he desired me to call upon him whenever I thought proper. My views and pursuits were now directed to one thing—the glory of God, and the salvation of my own soul, and the souls of others. For some weeks, indeed, while I remained ill, I thought of nothing but of dying, and going to heaven; but now, being recovered, I felt such love to the souls of my fellow creatures that I longed to tell every one what God had done for my soul. My brethren of the society, to whom I had now united myself, rejoiced over me in the Lord; and as soon as my health enabled me, they called upon me to pray in their class and prayer-meetings.

It was at this time that thoughts arose in my mind that I ought wholly to dedicate myself to God in preaching the gospel. I had already gained some little knowledge of the Methodist economy; but however I loved the preachers and the people, I determined, if ever I preached the

gospel, it should be as a minister in the Church of Scotland; and I had purposed to go to the college in Edinburgh, in order to prepare myself for the ministry. I now had some conversation with the minister of the parish on this head, and also with the Rev. Mr. Whitefield. The result was, I determined, whether I became a minister or not, to make it my one and only concern to live to Him who had lived and died for me. I was enabled to do so, and to dedicate all my spare time to reading, prayer, and divine improvement. The more I did this, however, the more the thoughts of preaching rested on my mind; but I was called to pass through another school, very different from a college, before that period should arrive.

Being now perfectly recovered, and in some degree established in the ways of God, and my parent and other relations made sensible that the change wrought upon me was from God, and not from man; I was called, by the providence of God, to spend a little time longer in Leith. I soon got acquainted with some pious people, and we frequently met together for prayer and spiritual conversation. This was the case both in Edinburgh and Leith, and was attended with a blessing to my soul. At this time we had no regular society in Edinburgh, but there were a few who were united together in Musselburgh, six miles from Edinburgh. Some pious dragoons, of the same regiment with those who first brought Methodism to Dunbar, were the instruments, under God, of bringing the same to Musselburgh.

Several of the inhabitants were awakened to a sense of their danger, and some were also brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were formed into a society, and the preachers visited them, as well as the society at Dunbar. I went to see them whenever I had an opportunity, and we mutually partook of the blessing of the Lord. Thus I went on till the month of October, when the providence of God opened a new scene to my view.

I had been disappointed in my expectations of going to the college; and although the thoughts of preaching would frequently come to my mind, yet I saw no prospect of such a thing taking place. There was at this time, an offer made to me, of taking a voyage to Charlestown, in South Carolina. I had a cousin in Edinburgh, who was in the mercantile line; and he and another gentleman offered to send several kinds of goods under my care, to dispose of them to the best advantage in that city, and to bring such returns as were most likely to answer the markets at home. As the prospect was flattering, and I understood the business, I entered into an agreement, and accordingly sailed for that place. The passage was long and tedious, but we came at last in safety to Charlestown. One particular inducement for me to undertake this voyage was, the captain was reported to be a pious man, and of an exemplary character. Another was, that as the prospect of dedicating myself to the work of the ministry was closed, I thought it my duty to employ my time and talents in a way that might tend to my

worldly advantage. I had consulted my friends and relatives, and all of them seemed to approve of the step I now took. I always had a strong desire to see foreign countries; and now, I thought, I shall have this desire gratified. I did not properly consider that I was but young in the ways of God, and wanted more establishment therein. However, I had a lesson to learn, and the Lord permitted me to take this step, in order that I might in some measure learn it. Whenever the weather permitted, we had prayers morning and evening; and all the officers, and ship's company, as well as passengers, regularly attended. This, in general, was performed by the captain; and sometimes he called upon me to read and pray also. I had been mentioned to him as a religious young man; and he showed a particular regard for me, both in going out and coming home. He would several times call me into his state-room, so called, and converse with me about the things of God. I soon found that he had formerly experienced a real work of grace upon his soul. I also learned that it was not with him as in times past. It was not long after our arrival at Charlestown, that I had a sad proof that he had fallen from grace. His business exposed him to the company of some merchants and captains of ships, and I observed that he came to his ship several times intoxicated. I was very much grieved to see this, and I once took the liberty to hint it to him. As I was but young, and he upwards of forty, if not fifty years of age, I was afraid he would be offended; but I found the

contrary. He was much of a gentleman in his manners, very different from most sea-captains; which made him receive what I said in a way I scarcely expected. He candidly confessed his being overtaken with liquor, and with tears lamented it; but, alas! his spiritual strength was departed from him, so that I saw him, at different times after this, overtaken in the same snare.

The vessel was at Charlestown several months before her cargo was discharged, and a fresh one on board of her. I had an opportunity of taking notice of the place, its inhabitants, and their conduct. The people appeared to be a dissipated and thoughtless generation. The little I saw in public, and what I observed in private companies, made me conclude that the world, and the things thereof, engrossed their whole attention. The cheapness of rum, and the heat of the climate, were strong inducements for the inhabitants to love drink; and many of them did so to excess. I also observed a very great profligacy of manners among the poor blacks, whether they were free or slaves. However, I found there were Lots, even in this Sodom. As I made it a point of conscience to attend the public worship every Lord's day, I observed the places pretty well filled, and the people seemed to hear with attention. The only minister I heard who seemed to speak home to the consciences of his hearers was a Baptist. I attended principally at his chapel, and had reason to bless God for the agreeable seasons I enjoyed under his ministry. I nevertheless found I was not at home, and I did not enjoy that depth of

communion with God, either in public or private, which I had experienced before I left Edinburgh. I longed to leave the place; and when the time came, I rejoiced at the thoughts of seeing my Christian friends in Leith, Edinburgh, and Dunbar, once more. We sailed from Charlestown in the month of February, and the vessel arrived at Leith about the middle of April. We had a very stormy passage; but our gracious Lord most mercifully preserved us. Our captain was ill most of the voyage; and what was worse, he made himself too often so by taking strong drink. He had truly been converted to God, and for years was a burning and a shining light; but that fatal opinion that he could not fall from grace had been the bane of his spiritual happiness. He several times took me by the hand, and thanked me; and then said, if God spared him to return home safe, he would go to sea no more.

The company that I was obliged to mingle with at Charlestown, on account of business, was far from pleasing to me; and the want of more retirement was attended with loss to my spiritual happiness. On my return home, when I compared the state of my mind to that which I expereinced before I left Britain, I found that my soul had suffered a real declension. On my knees, and with many tears, I cried to God to restore the joy of His salvation. My mind was much affected with this thought, that I had acted the part of Jonah, and had fled from the presence of the Lord, by making the prospect of gain one of the chief inducements for me to go

this voyage; and this was increased when I reflected on the conviction, that I had so deeply felt, of giving up myself to the work of the ministry. It was then that the thoughts of preaching the gospel returned upon me with double force.

Mr. Whitefield came to Edinburgh soon after my return from abroad; and I had the pleasure of hearing him, evening and morning, for some days. The Lord, in mercy, made the word by him a great blessing to my soul; so that I soon recovered all that peace and joy in believing which I had experienced twelve months before. My cup now ran over, and the joy of the Lord was my strength. I had now an opportunity of getting acquainted with several pious persons, to whom I was a stranger before I sailed for Carolina.

Mr. Wesley had paid several visits to Glasgow, at the kind solicitation of that good man, Dr. Gillies; but no society was formed there for several years afterwards. As a society was formed at Dunbar in the latter end of the year 1755 and at Musselburgh soon after, Mr. Wesley preached at both the above places in the years 1757 and 1759; and was much pleased to see the piety and zeal which the members of each society showed, as well as the congregations that attended. I was absent from Dunbar at the time of both his visits, and I had not the pleasure of seeing him for two years afterwards. In the year 1760 an opening was made for our preachers to visit Edinburgh and Aberdeen, with some other places in the north; but it was

not till the summer, 1761, that Mr. Wesley preached in the above cities. I came to Dunbar about the month of June, 1759. It was with great pleasure I met with my relatives and Christian friends, after an absence of near ten months. The Lord enabled me to improve the time and opportunities I now enjoyed, both to my own good, and the good of others. Now it was that I first got acquainted with my valuable friend Mr. Mather.[1] For several years there was no regular preaching at Dunbar, only the preachers paid them a visit from Newcastle as often as they could. Mr. Mather's visit was attended with a great blessing to the society of Dunbar, as also to the society at Musselburgh. I was greatly pleased, as well as profited, by his preaching and conversation. I never saw any one before that appeared so dead to all below, and so much alive to God, as also so deeply engaged in His work. I embraced every opportunity of his company and conversation, and the more I saw and heard, the more my heart cleaved to him. I was with him at Musselburgh, and stood before him when he preached out of doors, and he leaned on my shoulders, which I thought a very great honour; although I did not admire the appearance of some who were preparing to throw dirt at him. I had not learned then what it was to go through showers of dirt, stones, and rotten eggs, which I experienced several years afterwards. From the conversation I had with Mr. Mather, I had a very great desire to visit the societies of Alnwick,

[1] See vol. ii. of this series.

Newcastle, and Sunderland. In September I set off for Berwick, and from thence to Alnwick and Newcastle. I was greatly pleased, as well as profited, by all I saw or heard, whether in public, or with private individuals. Now it was that I saw Methodism in its beauty, as it reflected its doctrine and discipline, as as well as the divine power that attended the Word of God preached. My soul was greatly united to the people wherever I came; and every one I met with showed me kindness. While I was at Newcastle, in attending the preaching one Sunday afternoon, when Mr. Thomas Lee preached out of doors, he inquired who that young man was, that stood opposite to him, dressed in blue. As soon as he knew where I lodged, he sent for me, and showed me every mark of love and brotherly kindness. He said he was going to the north, in order to visit the societies in those parts, and desired me to go with him; which I most willingly complied with. When we came to one of the country places where he was to preach, he desired me to meet the little congregation that evening. I told him that I never attempted to preach, and begged to be excused. He then asked if I never had prayed or exhorted in public. I told him I had, sometimes, at our little prayer-meetings; then he replied that I should certainly speak to the people that evening. I entreated him to excuse me: but all I said was in vain; so that I was obliged to comply. I sung and prayed, and said something; but in such confusion, that I do not remember one sentence I delivered. I was heartily glad when I

had done, and told Mr. Lee that I hoped he would never ask me to speak or pray any more in public.

After my return to Dunbar, I determined I would spend some time in the north of England. While at home, my time was principally spent in reading, meditation, and prayer. The Lord was now preparing me for that work unto which He was pleased afterwards to call me. I was assured that I grew in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the month of November, Mr. Shent, from Leeds, called at Dunbar, and preached several times. As I had been making up my mind for some time, I now saw my way clear to go with him to Newcastle. After staying a few days there, I went to visit Sunderland, and determined to spend some time in that place. There was something in the spirit and temper of the people that was very pleasing to me, and I soon got acquainted with some who were much devoted to God. My soul increased in the divine life; and if ever I was sensible of deep communion with God, it was now. I greatly loved the conversation of pious old professors, as I learned more from their experience of the work of divine grace, than all that I ever conversed with before. To spend an hour with such was truly pleasing to me; and to this day I remember with gratitude the many useful lessons I then learned. I now saw the whole economy of Methodism in the most favourable light—the class and band meetings, meeting of the society, body-bands, lovefeasts, &c., I saw the great utility of, and it gave me the utmost

pleasure to conform to every part; the whole was calculated to promote the great end for which they were designed—the glory of God in the salvation of souls. The preachers lodged at the house where I was, which afforded me frequent opportunities of instruction; and although it is now almost forty-four years ago, yet I call to mind with the utmost pleasure the salutary effects of those interviews. It is with the most cordial satisfaction that I record the names of a Cownley, Hopper, Lowe, Rowell, Lee, Oddie, Hosmer, Olivers, and some others, whose names I do not at this time remember. I most unfeignedly thank God for the seasons I enjoyed with all of them. They have all run their race, and finished their course; and as they were all burning and shining lights in their day and generation, they are now in the garner of God, where I believe I shall soon join them, with many others, to part no more for ever!

Before I came to Sunderland, I had, at times, a discovery of the remaining evil of my heart, which at seasons made me very uneasy. In reading the oracles of God, I was clearly convinced that the grand design of the gospel was not only to bring sinners to enjoy a sense of the divine favour, through our Lord Jesus Christ, but also to restore them to that holiness without which no man can enjoy God in eternal glory. After I came to Sunderland, I had a discovery of this important truth in a more distinct and ample maner. I now began to seek this great salvation as I had never done before; and the more I sought it,

the more my soul grew in grace, and in the knowledge of the adorable Saviour. It was also at this time that the thoughts of preaching began to operate with more force upon my mind. This led me to much prayer, that I might not deceive my own soul. As these thoughts occurred, I was determined never to attempt any such thing, unless God should make it as plain to me as the sun at noon-day. Thus I spent the winter, and the early part of the spring, and most sensibly felt that my soul had gained ground in the heavenly race. My one desire was to please God, and to do the will of Heaven; and I laboured to redeem the time, in the most earnest and useful manner. I frequently strove to put away the thoughts of preaching from my mind; and the more I did so, the more would they return, and penetrate my heart.

As the spring approached, I frequently walked out into the fields; and many a precious moment have I experienced in reading and prayer, at the side of a hedge, when none but the Holy One of Israel either saw or heard me. It was in one of those seasons that I was seized in a very uncommon manner. I had such a discovery of the deplorable state of the human race, by original and actual sin, that I almost fainted away. Words cannot express the view, as well as the feelings, I at that time had, which led me to more earnest prayer, searching the Scriptures, and walking more closely with God. Some time after this, as I was one evening meeting my class, and happy in my soul, I was all on a sudden seized

with such horror as I had never known from the time I knew the pardoning love of God. As soon as the meeting was finished, I went home, and retired to private prayer; but all was darkness and painful distress. I found no intercourse with heaven, and faith and prayer seemed to have lost their wings. For five days and nights I went through such distress of soul as made sleep, and the desire of food, depart from me. I could attend to nothing but my painful feelings, and mourn and weep.

On the fifth day two friends called to see me, and we joined in prayer, and I found more liberty than I had experienced during the time of this painful distress. As soon as my friends were gone, I fell down on my knees, and continued in prayer till I went to bed. I now found a degree of sweetness, and communion with my Lord once more; and I closed my eyes with the pleasing sensation. I awoke very early next morning, and with such a change in my feelings, that I could scarce allow myself time to dress before I fell upon my knees to praise God; and when on my knees, had such a view of the goodness and love of God as almost overcame every power of body and soul. Soon after this, I had such a discovery made to the eye of my mind, of the dreadful state of all the human race (who were without God, and without hope in the world), that my knees smote together, and every joint trembled; while these words sounded in my ears, 'Whom shall I send? whom shall I send?' My heart replied, 'Lord, if I can be of any use, to

pluck one of these from the jaws of ruin, here I am, send me.' At that moment I felt such love for the souls of my fellow creatures as I never had done since I knew the pardoning love of God. A variety of scriptures were now applied to my mind, part of which were the following: 'Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence; touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord shall go before you, and the God of Israel shall be your rereward!' And, 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.' My whole heart cried out, 'Who am I, O Lord, or what is my father's house, that Thou shouldest employ such a poor, ignorant creature as I am?' Then it was that these words came with power to my soul: 'I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight.'

If my cup for some days had been a cup of inward anguish and distress, it was now filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory! It was similar to the overwhelming power of divine love, which I felt on that transporting morning, when the Lord brought my soul first out of darkness into His marvellous light. The only difference was in this —I had such a deep discovery of the ruined and deplorable state of man, and of the unsearchable

riches of Christ as I then had no conception of. Such were my feelings that I thought I could lay down my life if I might but be anywise instrumental of saving one soul from everlasting ruin. It did not now enter into my mind to think about a genteel provision for the work of the ministry, or of being deeply learned in polite literature, so as to acquire the applause of men; but only how I might obtain the approbation of God, connected with the salvation of my own soul, and also of the souls of others. In short, my will was so lost in the will of God that the whole cry of my heart was, 'Thy will be done, Thy will be done.'

When the overwhelming power of God in some measure subsided, I began to reason about my weakness, and unfitness in every respect for the work of the ministry; but how kind and gracious was the Lord, in conveying with power the following scriptures to my mind!—'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgement thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord' (Isa. liv. 17). All the above solemn transaction between God and my soul passed in the morning between three o'clock and seven, when my mind settled into a sweet and heavenly calm. Such had been my ignorance and folly, that many times I had said in my mind, 'I will never attempt to take a text, or stand up to preach the gospel, unless God shall condescend to make my call as clear as the

apostle Paul's was.' The Lord, therefore, in great mercy took this method to remove all scruples from my mind, and to make it as clear as the sun at noonday. Who would have thought, that, after such an abundant revelation of the will of God concerning me, I ever should have feared that I had deceived myself, and that the whole was a delusion? But of this in its proper place. I now saw that all the past dealings of God, in the painful as well as the pleasing experience I had gone through, were intended to prepare my soul for this important period. When I was called down to breakfast, all the family observed the pleasing change in my countenance, but they remained strangers to the cause; only I observed that I was delivered from my painful exercise of mind, and was now exceeding happy in the enjoyment of the love and comfortable presence of God. Indeed, if ever I lived in the suburbs of heaven, it was this day, and for several days after. On the Saturday we expected the preacher; and I could not help praying, in the simplicity of my heart, if what I had passed through was from God, that such a one might come. It was not his regular turn; but the kind providence of heaven condescended to my ignorance and weakness, in sending the very person I had prayed for. I now thought this was a token for good, and fully believed the whole I had gone through was indeed the work of the Lord. I took the first opportunity that offered to read to him the whole of the late transaction between God and my soul. As soon as I had done it, he replied, 'This may be

of God, and it may not be of Him; but nothing certain can be said, or a proper judgement formed, till a trial is made.' This was a wise and judicious manner of giving me his sentiments; but it cast a damp on my mind, and exposed me to painful reasonings. Nevertheless, matters were ordered so, that I went with one of the local preachers, and supplied his place on the Sabbath. I had occasionally given an exhortation before, but never ventured to take a text till this day; so that this was the first sermon I ever preached. Several of the people took me by the hand when I came down from the pulpit, but I was so ashamed that I could not look any of them in the face. But this was not all: I had been led to think, if I really was called of God to preach, the divine power would attend the word in a very remarkable manner, in the conviction and conversion of sinners. This arose from reading Messrs. Wesley's and Whitefield's *Journals*; as also in hearing Mr. Whitefield myself. I did not know the meaning of that saying, 'My time is not yet.' Indeed, I concluded I had been mistaken, and had deceived myself; and therefore I resolved to preach no more. In this resolution I returned from the place where I had preached to Sunderland, and was very much tempted and distressed As soon as I came home, I retired to my room, and poured out my soul before God, most fervently beseeching Him that I might not be deceived, and thereby ruin my own soul. Those who have gone through the same fire and water will understand what I then felt.

It was strongly suggested to my mind that if ever I attempted to preach any more, Satan would tear me limb from limb! I persevered in prayer till the sweat flowed from every pore, and till I could challenge all the powers of darkness, in the strength of the Lord, to hurt a single hair of my head.

It was about this time that I was more deeply convinced of the necessity of recovering the image of the blessed God. What by my exercise of mind about preaching, and the discovery of inbred sin, it might have been said,

> Commences now the agonizing strife,
> Previous to nature's death, and second life!

Sometimes I thought I would preach no more; but when I refrained I was truly miserable. Through the mercy of God, wherever I went, the people received me with pleasure, and kindly solicited my return among them. But all this did not satisfy me: as I did not see the fruit of my labours, as I expected, I was much cast down and distressed. I did not then know that I had not wisdom or grace sufficient to bear any remarkable success in my preaching. I was enabled, however, to go on my way, if not at all times rejoicing, yet with a pleasing hope I should yet see better days. Early in the spring, 1761, another local preacher with myself resolved to spend the ensuing summer in breaking up fresh ground: a blessing attended our labours, and we were encouraged to go on in the work of the Lord. In the beginning of June, Mr. Wesley

being on his return from Scotland, and as I never had seen him, I was desirous to give him the meeting before he came to Sunderland. Accordingly, five or six friends set off from Sunderland, and being informed that Mr. Wesley was to preach at Morpeth at one o'clock, we set forward; but when we came to Morpeth, we found he had preached at twelve instead of one o'clock. We put up our horses, and hastened to the market-place, where he was giving out the last hymn. We were not too late, however, for the divine blessing. As soon as I came near to hear the words of the hymn, I was so struck with the presence of God, that if I had not leaned on a friend's arm, I should have fallen to the ground. The words of the hymn were,

> Now, even now, the Saviour stands,
> All day long He spreads His hands.

As I had read all Mr. Wesley's *Works*, and in particular his *Journals*, I had formed a very high opinion of him; and the moment I distinctly saw him, and heard his voice, such a crowd of ideas rushed upon my mind, as words cannot express. The union of soul I then felt with him was indescribable.

I had long considered Mr. John Wesley as the father of the Methodists, under God. If Mr. Whitefield was rendered such a blessing to my soul, in my first acquaintance with God, and the things of eternity, I had since learned that Mr. Wesley had been a father to him and others, who afterwards had been burning and shining lights

in their day and generation. I could not help saying in my mind, 'And is this the man who has braved the winter storm and summer's sun, and run to and fro throughout Great Britain and Ireland, and has crossed the Atlantic Ocean, to bring poor wretched sinners to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ?' I looked at him with a degree of astonishment, and from my very soul could bless God that He had so highly favoured me as to let me see this eminent servant of the King of kings and Lord of lords! It was now that the foundation of that union was laid, which remained inviolate for thirty-one years, to the time he was called to his great and eternal reward! I have a thousand times over blessed the God of heaven that ever I saw his face or heard his voice; and I shall continue to do so while life remains, and I hope to spend a glorious eternity with him.

As soon as the singing and prayer were concluded, I went to the friend's house where Mr. Wesley was to dine. We had the pleasure of his conversation for some little time, and after dinner rode on to Plessey: he preached there at five o'clock, and then rode on to Newcastle. Mr. Wesley's company and conversation by the way made this one of the most pleasant rides that I ever had known. In the course of a few days, Mr. Wesley came to Sunderland, and I had the pleasure of hearing him, morning and evening, while he was there. His preaching was attended with a peculiar blessing to my soul, in giving me a more clear conception of purity of heart, and the way to obtain it, by faith alone;

but when he read some letters in the society, giving an account of the great work of God in London, and some other places, I was so deeply affected with a sense of inbred sin that I was almost overwhelmed by it. For several years I had seen, and at seasons deeply felt, the need of purity of heart; but now my soul was pierced with such keen convictions, as gave me no rest, night or day. In short, my heart was so laid open, and so completely dissected by the word and Spirit of God, that I was ready to cast away my confidence, seeing it so desperately wicked.

I wanted to open my mind to Mr. Wesley; but the power of temptation shut my mouth, so that I could neither inform him of what I intended respecting my call to preach, nor the present experience of my soul. The Lord in great mercy preserved me from casting away my shield, and sinking in the deep waters, which at times appeared ready to swallow me up. However, I was not suffered to sink under the pressure of this burden. There were a few that were earnestly seeking the great salvation, deliverance from inbred sin; and with them I associated. None of them appeared to me to labour under such deep distress, nor had such deep discoveries of the evils of their heart, as I laboured under. From what I heard of their experience, I was afraid to mention the whole of my feelings, lest I should stumble any of them. The Lord knew what He was preparing me for, and therefore He was pleased to give me to drink deeper of the painful cup, that I might know how to comfort and

encourage others. I was also at this time strongly tempted to preach no more, till God had purified my heart, and brought me into this glorious liberty. When I gave way to this temptation, I was so much the more unhappy; and therefore I still continued to preach, and the Lord was pleased to bless my labours. It was about this time that I had an opportunity of conversing with one who professed to love the Lord with all her heart, soul, mind, and strength. Her conversation was much blessed to my soul, and I saw the way of deliverance more clearly than I had done before.

After labouring as in the fire, from the month of June to September, the Lord gave me such a discovery of His love as I never had known before. I was meeting with a few Christian friends, who were all athirst for entire holiness, and after several had prayed, I also called on the name of the 'Deliverer that came out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' While these words were pronounced with my heart and lips, 'Are we not, O Lord, the purchase of Thy blood? let us then be redeemed from all iniquity,' in a moment the power of God so descended upon my soul, that I could pray no more. It was

> That speechless awe which dares not move,
> And all the silent heaven of love!

I had many times experienced the power of redeeming love, and in such a manner as I scarce knew whether in the body or not. But this manifestation of the presence of my adorable

Lord and Saviour was such as I never had witnessed before, and no words of mine can properly describe it. I can only say 'that my soul was filled with serene peace unutterable, and full of glory.' It was such a heaven opened in my heart as I never expected to experience on this side eternity. The language of my heart every moment was, 'Oh, what has Jesus done for me! Oh, what has Jesus done for me!' Soon after, some of the friends present asked if I had received the blessing of purity of heart. I replied, 'I cannot tell what the Lord hath done for me; but this I can say, I never felt such a change, through all the powers of my soul, as I now feel!' When we parted, I left them all in tears; but most were tears of joy. Yet, as I had no particular scripture applied, I durst not say that the blood of Christ had cleansed me from all sin. I longed to retire into private, and to pour out my whole heart and soul to my blessed Deliverer! Oh, what an evening did I experience! The windows of heaven were opened, and the skies poured down righteousness, and great was my glorying in God my Saviour.

When the overwhelming power of divine love began to subside a little, and I had no more such manifestations as I had had the first evening of my great deliverance, Satan began to suggest I had not received purity of heart. So far the tempter would allow, that I had received a very great blessing; but not deliverance from inbred sin. Having none to converse with who were established in that glorious liberty, and therefore

a stranger to Satan's devices, I was ready to conclude I might be indeed mistaken. By these subtle suggestions, I was led into hurtful reasonings, and this made way for doubts concerning the glorious work which God had wrought in my soul. However, I still enjoyed liberty, and I felt nothing contrary to love arise in my heart. When I opened my mind to one of the preachers, and told him a little of my experience, he asked me if I thought God had delivered me from the remains of the carnal mind. I replied, 'I cannot tell, only I enjoy such a liberty as I never did enjoy since I have known the pardoning love of God.' He encouraged me to go forward, and to expect the witness of what the Lord had done for me.

I saw my great business was to keep close to God, and continue my meetings with those few who wished to be all devoted to the Lord Jesus.

In the beginning of October I wrote to Mr. Wesley, and informed him of what had passed in my soul; as also what I had gone through for near two years, concerning my call to preach. He soon answered my letter, and closed it with these words, 'You will never get free of all those evil reasonings till you give yourself wholly up to the work of God!' Soon after this I went up to London, and embraced the first opportunity of waiting upon Mr. Wesley: he spoke to me as a father to a son, and advised me to decline all thoughts of temporal concerns, and to go into a circuit. The importance of the work appeared to be such as made me tremble. He desired me to consider the conversation, and call upon him

again. In the meantime, I embraced every opportunity of meeting with those whom I observed were all in earnest for deliverance from inbred sin. The kind providence of God soon brought me acquainted with some of the most excellent of the earth, several of whom had been brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. With such I constantly associated, and their prayers and conversation were a great blessing to my soul. The Lord removed all my doubts and evil reasonings, and by His grace I knew I loved the Lord my God with all my soul, mind, and strength. In short, I was not ashamed to declare that I assuredly knew that the Lord Jesus had purified my heart by faith in His blood, and that I felt nothing contrary to the pure love of God. What seasons of refreshment did I find in the select band, and other private meetings at this time! My soul was like a watered garden from day to day, and my cup was running over. I no longer felt reluctance to go out as a poor despised Methodist preacher; whereas, before this period, I really thought I could have chosen death as soon. I therefore embraced the opportunity of waiting upon Mr. Wesley again, and told him I was willing to labour where he thought proper. He told me 'that Mr. Murlin, who was then in the Sussex Circuit, was going down to Norwich, and that I should go and supply his place'; and I accordingly went.

Sevenoaks, in Kent, was the first place I preached at. I had paid a very particular attention to the manner of Mr. Wesley, as also of Mr.

Maxfield, when preaching in London. I took notice of the pointed and close applications they made to the consciences of the people. As I had them for a pattern, I endeavoured to tread in their steps. I enforced, as well as I could, a free, full, and present salvation. The Lord soon set to His seal, so that some were stirred up to expect pardon, and others deliverance from the remains of the carnal mind. The goodness of God was manifested in a peculiar manner with respect to my own soul; for I had not been a week in the circuit before I had such a discovery of my call to preach as confirmed all my former experience. The preaching had not been above three years in this little circuit, and one preacher supplied the whole. I therefore attended to the discipline of the societies, as well as preaching to them; and as all the societies were but small, I always met them, by speaking to every member after I had done preaching. This I did the first time I went round the circuit; and I soon saw the salutary effects thereof. I knew the state of every member; and this enabled me to address them in public and private accordingly. It pleased God first to visit some in Sevenoaks with a sense of pardon, as also of the virtue of the all-cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. When I mentioned this as I went round the circuit, the flame broke out in such a manner as was never seen or felt among them before.[1]

[1] Wesley wrote, February 20, 1762: 'By all means go into Sussex again. And you may continue in that circuit till another preacher comes. I trust God has sent you thither for the good of others, and of your own soul' (*Works* xii. 320).

At my third or fourth visit, upwards of twenty found peace with God, and several others were enabled to testify that the blood of Christ had cleansed them from all sin. Now it was that I saw the arm of the Lord made bare, and the fruit of my labours, when God had prepared my soul, by many temptations and many blessings, to bear the same. Oh the wisdom and goodness of God in His dealings with His creatures! Every day one or another was brought to the knowledge of God; others filled with His pure love, and several awakened to a sense of their lost and undone state.

In one of those meetings at Ewhurst Cross, it pleased God to visit Mr. Richardson, who was then curate of the parish. A few months after, he came to London, and laboured as a clergyman in connexion with Mr. Wesley, and was a burning and a shining light, till called to his eternal reward. That memorable day, when the Lord visited Mr. Richardson's soul, was such a one as I had never seen. From twelve to twenty persons in the two little societies of Northiam and Ewhurst were brought to the knowledge of God. I was engaged almost the whole of the day in praying and speaking to the people. I was so filled with the love of God that I scarcely slept the whole night; and yet I got up in the morning as a giant refreshed with wine.

I went to the Conference held at Leeds in July, 1762, where I was appointed to the Sheffield Circuit, and had for my companions John Nelson, William Ingill,[1] and James Clough. The Sheffield

[1] Probably a misprint for 'Fugill.'

Circuit at that time extended to Leicester on the south, and beyond Barnsley in the north. The word of the Lord prospered, but particularly in Sheffield and Rotherham. Many were added to the society, and several brought to know the justifying and sanctifying influences of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, with several other places, partook of the revival.

At the next Conference, in London, the Fund for the old preachers was first set on foot. I was appointed to labour the ensuing year, 1763, in the Devonshire Circuit, which took in Somerset as well as Devon. My fellow labourers were Nicholas Manners and William Menithorp. We soon began to see some fruit of our labour. Except Tiverton and Cullompton, the societies were but small, as were the congregations also. We preached a free, full, and present salvation. In some places we saw the fruit of our labours; but not without opposition from those that were without, as well as others that were within. Where we introduced preaching, we had a great deal of tumult and confusion, and also in some of the old societies, particularly in the city of Exeter. However, in most of the societies there was an increase of number; in others, many were savingly brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We had a very remarkable work in the little society of North Molton, both for grace and number. The doctrine, and the witnesses of purity of heart, gave much offence to a well-meaning man, who was a schoolmaster

and local preacher. He gave way to a very improper spirit, which hurt the work, and grieved the spirits of many, as well as myself. How much hurt will one jarring string cause in a society, and sometimes in a circuit! There was one thing which had an unhappy effect on the minds of some in that society, and in other societies of the circuit. Mr. Menithorp was obliged to leave the circuit; the preacher who came in his place neither understood nor loved the Methodist doctrines or discipline, and therefore the discontented found a kind of refuge in him; which hurt the work in several places, and greatly pained my mind. Nevertheless, we had such a revival of the work of God as had not been known for years.

In 1764 the Conference was in Bristol, and I was appointed assistant preacher for Cornwall. I had no sooner given my consent, than my heart was filled with the divine presence, and a conviction that I should see such a year as I had never done since I was an itinerant preacher. All the time I remained in Bristol, before I set out for my circuit, I enjoyed such communion with God as I had not done in all the former part of the Conference. In this happy frame of mind I continued till I reached Redruth. I had little or no acquaintance with those who were to be my fellow labourers, except two of them; one of whom I could truly depend on, as a man whose soul was wholly in the work of God. As soon as I had time to converse a little with our friends, I found that Brother Brammah and his wife

had not been idle the few days they had been in Redruth before me. The first evening I preached, the Lord was pleased to give me an earnest of what He was about to do in this town, as well as in all the circuit. Ten or twelve were awakened under that sermon.

I looked upon this as a token for good, and I believed we should see glorious days of the Son of Man. The whole county was one circuit; but we were obliged to divide it into two: three preachers supplied the west, and three the eastern part. My companions in the west were Messrs. Brammah and Stevens: those in the east were Messrs. Oldham, Darney, and Whitehead, who were truly alive to God, and they were blessed to the people wherever they preached. Brother Whitehead was only come out, at this Conference, on trial. Brother Darney had preached for years: he had been eccentric in his manner of labouring in the Connexion, and Mr. Wesley, with my brethren, thought I might be able to cure him. For a season he behaved pretty well, and was ready to be advised; but he relapsed into his former conduct, and advanced opinions in public contrary to the Methodist doctrine and discipline; so that we were obliged to call in a young man to labour in his place, and dismiss him from the circuit, and that by Mr. Wesley's express approbation.[1] The greatest hurt he did was in the society at Plymouth Dock, where he nearly divided the people. My other fellow labourers were steady, and alive to

[1] See Wesley's Letters, *Works* xii. 320, 321; and his *Journal*, September 18, 1765.

God, and much blessed in their labours. The work of God more or less prospered in every society in the county. In two or three months hundreds were added to the societies in the west, and many savingly brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; many backsliders were restored, and a most wonderful change took place in every parish where the gospel was preached. Most of the country villages were like Eden, and as the garden of the Lord! It was not uncommon for ten or twenty to find peace with God in one day, or at one sermon or lovefeast, in many places.

After preaching two or three nights in Redruth, I joined about forty, young and old, to the society; and many of them had found a clear sense of the love of God previous to their becoming members. Indeed, the Spirit was poured out from on high, and great was our glorying in God our Saviour.

Before I left the country, we had joined near a thousand to the different societies, most of whom were joined to the Lord in one spirit; and some hundreds were enabled to love God with all their hearts. Such a work of divine grace I had never been witness to before; but these were only drops before the shower when compared with the number of young persons who were deeply wrought upon, and some children also.

When the time drew near to leave the circuit, my feelings were such as words cannot describe. The parting was deeply affecting, and in particular with my Redruth friends, who wept and mourned as one for his first-born. Nine out of ten of those

friends are gone to their eternal reward: and I hope to meet them

> On yonder happy plains,
> Where love in endless triumph reigns.

The Conference was this year, 1765, held at Manchester, for the first time. The ride was long, and the weather extremely hot, which afflicted me and my companions not a little. The heat was very great during the Conference, so that I was seized with fever, which confined me eight weeks at Portwood Hall, near Stockport. Mr. and Mrs. Mayer, with their kind son, paid all the attention to me in their power. My life was in great danger; but, by the blessing of God and the judicious treatment of the apothecary, the fever took a favourable turn, and I began to recover.

During my affliction, my hope was full of a glorious immortality, and I felt a desire to depart and be with Christ, which appeared to me to be far better than to live any longer on earth. The Lord, however, saw fit to protract my life; and as soon as I was able to travel, I set out for my circuit. I was appointed to spend part of the year in the Newcastle and part in the Dales Circuit.

The good air of the north had a salutary effect on my health; so that in a few weeks I was able to go through my accustomed labour. My fellow labourers were Messrs. Robertshaw and Ellis; they were worthy, steady, and useful men. We laboured in love, and had some degree of prosperity in the circuit; but not equal to what I had seen in Cornwall.

At the next Conference, held at Leeds, I was stationed for the Epworth Circuit. I had for my companions Messrs. Brammah and Harrison. I was remarkably well in my health when I came into the circuit; but I had not been above two months in it when I was seized with the fever and ague. The disorder hung about me all the ensuing year, so that my labours were rendered a burden to me. Nevertheless, the work of the Lord revived, and we saw the fruits of our labours among the people.[1]

I went to the Conference held in London, 1767. Our friends in the Epworth Circuit having written to Mr. Wesley for me to remain with them another year, he complied with their request. My journey to London, and back to Epworth, was useful to my health; so that I had no return of my ague the ensuing year. I had abundant reason also to bless the Lord that I saw more fruit of my labours the second year than I had done the first. My fellow labourers were earnest and useful men; and we went on hand in hand in love, and the blessing of the Lord attended our steps.

The following Conference was held at Bristol, where I was appointed to labour among my friends in the west of Cornwall once more. Mr. Wesley visited Cornwall this autumn, and his visit was rendered a blessing to many. A peculiar circumstance took place this year, which I cannot pass over in silence. Among the young people who were brought to the knowledge of God when I was in Cornwall before, there was a young

[1] See a letter of Wesley's to him, October 9, 1766 (*Works* xiii. 163).

woman in St. Ives, about fourteen or fifteen years of age, amiable for her years, both in sense, person, and piety: she then lived with an old lady, a relation, whose fortune she would have possessed, had she survived her. When the young woman heard I was appointed to Cornwall again, she said, 'Mr. Rankin is come to preach my funeral sermon'; and so it happened; but she was taken from the evil to come. Having formed a connexion with a young gentleman who was a stranger to vital religion, she was so sensible of the snare that lay before her that she several times told me she believed the Lord would prevent their marriage. She had suffered loss in her soul on this account; but the Lord in mercy gave her repentance before she was seized by the illness which terminated in her death. I believe I shall meet her spirit in heaven. I mention the above to show the danger which pious young persons are in from forming connexions with those who do not walk in the paths that lead to glory.

When I had gone round the circuit, I found cause for mourning over several, who had once run well, but who had turned aside from the holy commandment delivered unto them. I determined to do all in my power to call the wanderers back. My fellow labourers were zealous, and alive to the Lord; and we saw some fruit by a little revival in some places. Some few that were eminently useful four years ago had suffered loss; but it pleased God to stir them up once more. Upon the whole, we had a pleasant and profitable year; but not to be compared with the former.

The Conference for 1769 was held in Leeds. I was stationed for the London and Sussex Circuits. Near the latter end of March I set off from the city to meet Mr. Wesley at Birmingham, in order to accompany him in his tour through the kingdom. Mr. Helton went with him also. Mr. Wesley's plan and design were, if, in any place which he visited, there was any particular divine influence upon the congregation or society, to leave one of us there for a few days, and then we were to meet him again at a place appointed.

Mr. Wesley preached in a variety of places: but nothing very particular took place till we reached Manchester. Here there was the appearance of a revival among the people, and Mr. Wesley left me for a few days that I might endeavour to promote it. I found it a time to be remembered. I had not experienced such a season since I left London. The power and presence of God were among the people in a very wonderful manner. I afterwards met Mr. Wesley at Bolton, on his way to Glasgow. We had long and tiresome rides, and slept several times at inns by the way. Mr. Wesley left me to spend a few days at Glasgow, after he had gone for Edinburgh; and I hope my labours among the people were not in vain. After I had done preaching, and met the society on the Sunday evening, ten or twelve came to speak to me, and to request they might be admitted into the society. On my way to meet Mr. Wesley at Perth, my mare fell with me, and cut her knees so much that I was obliged to go to Edinburgh. 'What I do, thou

knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter!' This accident made me visit Dunbar sixteen or eighteen days sooner than I should have done; where, to my great surprise, I found my mother on her death-bed. I attended her in her last moments; and I sincerely hope I shall meet her in that day when the Lord maketh up His jewels. She had always been a tender and indulgent parent to me; and her best interests, present and eternal, always lay near my heart. I could not help admiring the hand of Providence that had arrested me on my journey, by the misfortune which befell my mare, that I might once more see my mother before she died. Near the time of my mother's death, one of the most amiable members of the society died also. She was a sensible and pious woman: I preached a funeral sermon both for her and my mother.

Mr. Wesley soon came to Dunbar; and my much-esteemed friend Dr. Hamilton did all in his power to make his visit agreeable. Mr. Wesley desired me to spend a week or two more at Dunbar, and then to follow him into England, and I afterwards joined him at Leeds. Mr. Helton was left behind in the north, as he could not bear the long journeys.

The Conference was in London in 1770; and after it was concluded, Mr. Wesley expressed a desire for me to accompany him to the West of England. We had many refreshing seasons in different places; but we had one in Redruth that exceeded them all. Here the windows of heaven were, as it were, opened, and the skies poured

down righteousness. I believe there was not a dry eye in the whole congregation. I do not remember that we had such a remarkable season in all our journey; although we had many displays of the power and love of God.[1]

Mr. Wesley returned by Bristol; and after his full time was spent in that city, and the places adjacent, he set off for Portsmouth, and I returned to London with Mrs. Wesley, where I remained for the rest of the year.

In the latter end of October the account arrived of the death of that venerable servant of God, Mr. Whitefield. Mr. Wesley preached his funeral sermon at Tottenham Court Chapel, on the Sunday morning, and at the Tabernacle in the evening. It was one of the most awful and solemn sights which I ever beheld. The man I greatly loved was now gone to his eternal reward; and he who preached his funeral sermon is also now gone, and has joined him, and the whole assembly and church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven. A little while, and we shall all meet to part no more for ever. Of all the men I ever knew, the above two eminent servants of God claimed my deepest regard and warmest affection.

When the time of the Conference drew near, I found a desire to spend a little more of my life with my friends in Cornwall: this desire met with Mr. Wesley's entire approbation; so that at the Conference in Bristol, 1771, I was stationed

[1] For a revival at Kingswood, see Wesley's *Journal*, September 26, 1770.

for the West once more.[1] I did not, however, see the days which I had formerly seen in those parts; and I could only pray, 'Lord, let Thy kingdom come.' I could truly appeal to the Searcher of hearts that the prosperity of His kingdom was more to me than the whole world; yea, than life itself. I continued to labour till the Conference drew near, and then went, with some of my companions in the vineyard of my Lord, to Leeds, where it was, according to rotation, held. Here I met with Mr. Webb, who had lately arrived from America. Mr. Wesley had been dissatisfied with the conduct of those who superintended the rising work there; and while I was in London he had frequently mentioned this to me. I had made it a matter of much prayer, and it appeared to me that the way was opening for me to go. When the work in America came before the Conference, Mr. Wesley determined to appoint me superintendent of the whole; and I chose my much-esteemed friend and brother Shadford[2] to accompany me to that continent. I had proved his uprightness, piety, and usefulness in several circuits, where he had laboured with me, and I knew I could depend upon him. It was settled that we should sail in the spring, and in the meantime that I should labour in the York Circuit. I went accordingly, and remained in those parts from the Conference till about the latter end of March. During the time I spent in

[1] Wesley writes to his brother Charles, August 3, 1771: 'I will not throw away Thomas Rankin on the people of London. He shall go where they know the value of him.'

[2] See vol. ii. of this series.

this circuit, I considered deeply and with much prayer the importance of the work which lay before me. It had dwelt upon my mind, more or less, for some years; and the nearer the period arrived, the greater it appeared to me. The thoughts of leaving Mr. Wesley, as well as my brethren, whose counsel and advice were always at hand, and ready on every trying occasion, was no small exercise to my mind. I was about to bid adieu to my relatives, and to one whom I loved as my own soul, and who afterwards was my partner in life for nineteen years; but the consideration of the work of God, and the prosperity of Zion, swallowed up every other concern. I rode to Birmingham to receive my last instructions from Mr. Wesley. The interview was pleasing and affecting, as well as instructive, which I hope to remember to my latest breath. I went from Birmingham to London, where I spent a few days, and prepared some little matters for my voyage.

After taking a solemn and affectionate leave of my friends in London, I went on for Bristol, from whence the ship was to sail for Philadelphia. I found my much-esteemed friend Mr. Pawson, with Mr. Allen, at Bristol, who laid themselves out to make everything easy and comfortable to us during our voyage. Mr. and Mrs. Webb had taken care to arrange all things respecting our provisions; and my business was to take care of what books and clothes we should want for our future use and accommodation.

On Good Friday, April 9, 1773, I embarked on board the *Sally*, Captain Young, commander, bound from Bristol to Philadelphia. My fellow passengers were, Mr. and Mrs. Webb, Messrs. Shadford, Yerbury, and Rowbotham. Besides the ship's company, we had several steerage passengers and indented servants. The wind was fair from Pill, and soon brought us down to the Isle of Lundy, where our pilot left us.

Saturday, 10.—The wind favoured us, so that we made good way down the Bristol Channel. All the passengers were extremely sick. We began, however, to have morning and evening prayers in the cabin, desiring all who possibly could to attend; and the Lord favoured us with His blessing. Sunday and Monday, the wind blowing fresh from the north-west, we soon got clear of the land; but all the passengers continued to be more or less sick, so that we could not observe that regularity in divine worship which we desired.

Tuesday, 13.—We spent some time this morning in exhortation as well as prayer, and had most of the sailors and steerage passengers present. The Lord was in the midst of us, and attended our meeting with power from on high. Wednesday and Thursday, the wind blew very hard, and the sea ran high, the ship rolled much, which made it very uneasy to most of the passengers, and deprived them of sleep. We called upon the Lord, and found Him a very present help in time of need.

Friday, 16.—The wind shifted about to the

north, and blew a pleasant gale. The ship glided sweetly along, and kept her proper course. We now settled our plan how we should divide our time in future. In the morning before breakfast we had public prayer, for all the passengers and ship's company. At twelve o'clock we spent half an hour in singing and prayer among ourselves. At six o'clock in the evening we did the same; and at eight we had all on board the ship to attend the evening service. This practice we were enabled to continue as long as we were on our passage to America.

Sunday, 18.—The weather was pleasant, and we had the cabin full at morning prayer. Captain Webb added a word of exhortation, and it was attended with the divine blessing. At eleven o'clock Mr. Shadford preached on the quarter-deck. Passengers and sailors paid the deepest attention; and surely it will not all be as water spilt on the ground. At seven o'clock we concluded the Lord's day with exhortation, singing, and prayer; and I found much liberty and enlargement of heart. We were led out in earnest prayer for our friends and Christian brethren in England, as also that God would open a great and an effectual door for the spreading of His gospel among those to whom His mercy and providence were now sending us. Indeed, we felt the gracious influence of the divine presence so amongst us, that we could scarcely conclude. The Lord did indeed open the windows of heaven, and the skies poured down righteousness.

Sunday, 25.—The wind continued to blow fresh at north-west all this day, so that we made a good stretch to the west-south-west. After spending some time in reading and prayer, with profit and pleasure, I preached to all who could attend; and some felt the power of the word to alarm and quicken their dead souls. Mr. Webb gave an exhortation at six o'clock, and we concluded the day with praise and mutual prayer. Upon the whole, this day was spent in an agreeable manner. Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever! Monday and Tuesday, the wind was fair, and it blew a pleasant gale; which enabled us to proceed a good way westward. We continued our usual exercises, morning, noon, and night, to all who could attend.

Saturday, May 1.—We are now come more than half way towards Philadelphia. All on board are well, and no accident of importance has befallen any one.

Monday, 10.—The wind was rather contrary all last night as well as to-day, so that we advanced but slowly on our way; the weather, however, was pleasant, which made our sleep and time more agreeable. Our public and private devotions were attended with a divine blessing this day. I found occasion for all the grace bestowed, to bear with the peevishness of some, and the ignorance of others.

Sunday, 16.—Early this morning it began to blow hard at south-west. The motion of the ship made several of my fellow passengers sick. After our morning reading and prayer, I preached from

Rom. vi. 23. I found a measure of freedom; but still preaching on board a ship is rather uncomfortable. At six o'clock in the evening, Brother Webb closed the day with exhortation and prayer. The word seemed to lay hold on some of their hearts, and they began to show it by their tears. May the God of love have mercy upon their souls! About ten days ago, several of the indented servants were taken ill of a fever, and were for some time delirious. Having some medicines on board, I treated them as Dr. Tissot prescribes in his *Advice to the People*; and it pleased God that they all soon recovered. I attended them with food, as well as medicine; and now that they were better, and able to attend divine service, I discovered that my poor labours had not been in vain in the Lord.

Tuesday, June 1.—We were enabled to lie mostly west all last night, and we were favoured with a fine breeze, so that we advanced swiftly towards the land. Between eight and nine in the morning, we saw it, and soon after a pilot-boat, which came alongside, and put a pilot on board a little after dinner. By the wind we were driven to the leeward of Cape May, on the Jersey shore. We beat up to the windward all the afternoon, in order to open the way, that we might have a fair wind up the Delaware river. As we drew nearer the shore, the pleasing view of the green trees, and many of them towering high above the rest, made the prospect delightful. None can conceive, but those who have experienced it, the sensations that arise in the breast on seeing the land, after

some weeks of viewing nothing but the sea and open firmament. I believe we all felt grateful to the God of all our mercies, and most earnestly prayed that He would go with us to a strange land and among a strange people. The prospect was charming and delightfully pleasant on both sides of the river. The spreading trees, and the great variety of shades, heightened the scene; with the addition now and then of a plantation, with large orchards of peach and apple trees, as also large fields of Indian corn. Indeed, I never beheld such a lovely prospect in any part of my life before. We came to anchor late in the evening, opposite Chester, about sixteen miles below Philadelphia, after a run of above one hundred miles from six in the morning.

Friday and Saturday, I was employed in getting our trunks and boxes on shore. I preached on Friday evening for the first time, and afterwards met the leaders of classes and bands. Upon the whole, I have reason to be thankful for what of the divine presence I have felt this day, as well as in His service this evening. Saturday evening, Mr. Shadford gave a warm exhortation to all who attended. I found the want of more retirement since I came on shore. My soul cannot live without it.

As I am now, by the providence of God, called to labour for a season on this continent, do Thou, O Holy One of Israel, stand by Thy weak and ignorant servant! Show Thyself glorious in power, and in divine majesty. Let Thine arm be made bare, and stretched out to save, so that

wonders and signs may be done in the name of the holy child Jesus. From what I see and hear, and so far as I can judge, if my brethren who first came over had been more attentive to our discipline, there would have been, by this time, a more glorious work in many places of this continent. Their lovefeasts, and meetings of society, were laid open to all their particular friends; so that their number did not increase, and the minds of our best friends were thereby hurt.

Sunday, 13.—Brother Asbury preached in the morning at seven o'clock, from Ruth ii. 4. During the sermon I was led to reflect on the motives which induced me to leave my native land, and Christian friends and brethren, and cross the Atlantic Ocean, to a land and people unknown. I could appeal to God, with the utmost sincerity of heart, I had only one thing in view, His glory, the salvation of souls, connected with my own. In a moment the cloud broke, and the power of God rested upon my soul, and every gloom fled away, as morning shades before the rising sun. I had then faith to believe that I should see His glory, as I had seen it in the sanctuary. At six o'clock in the afternoon I preached from Judges iii. 20. After preaching, I met the society. The Lord was in the midst, as a flame of fire among dry stubble.

Monday, 14.—Brother Asbury preached at five o'clock in the morning, and I preached in the evening. The Lord was in the word, and crowned it with His divine blessing. I spoke my mind

freely and fully to the society, and I trust not in vain. One thing struck me a good deal this day. I was really surprised at the extravagance of dress which I beheld, and in particular among the women. I very well remember I observed to a friend, that 'if God had a love for the inhabitants of this city, He would surely send some sore chastisement upon them.' Little did I think then of the unhappy war that followed, in the calamities of which the people of New York had a large share. Indeed, the pride of dress, and luxury of every kind, had risen to a great height. I could not help taking notice of it when I met the society, and earnestly entreated them not to conform to this world.

Sunday, July 4.—I preached in the morning at seven. Blessed be God, I found freedom and tenderness to apply the word in a particular manner to those who were groaning for pardon of sin and for purity of heart. Brother Asbury preached in the evening a home Methodist sermon, and the Lord crowned it with a divine blessing. We concluded the day with a general lovefeast. The people spoke with life and divine liberty, and in particular some of the blacks. The Lord was present indeed, and the shout of the King of Glory was heard in the camp of Israel.

Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, we had our first little Conference. There were present seven preachers, besides Brothers Boardman and Pilmoor, who were to return to England. The amount of all the members in the different

societies did not exceed one thousand one hundred and sixty. From the wonderful accounts I had heard in England, and during our passage, I was led to think there must be some thousands awakened, and joined as members of our societies; but I was now convinced of the real truth. Some of the above number, I also found afterwards, were not closely united to us. Indeed, our discipline was not properly attended to, except at Philadelphia and New York; and even in those places it was upon the decline. Nevertheless, from the accounts I heard, there was a real foundation laid of doing much good, and we hoped to see greater things than these. The preachers were stationed in the best manner we could, and we parted in love; and also with a full resolution to spread genuine Methodism, in public and private, with all our might. It was thought proper that I should spend a little more time at New York, and Brother Shadford at Philadelphia.

Sunday, 15.—Mr. Pilmoor preached in the morning, and I supplied the evening. I met the society afterwards, and spoke my mind plainly of some things which tended to hinder the work of God and in which I sincerely desired to see an amendment. If love and harmony do not prevail among leaders and people, it is impossible for the work to prosper among them. A party spirit has greatly hindered the work of God in this city; I long to see it torn up by the very roots.

Sunday, 29.—I preached at the usual hours, morning and evening, and afterwards met the society. In some good degree, this has been a

Sabbath of rest to my soul. Blessed for ever be the name of the Lord for all His mercies. I long to be holy in life, and in all manner of conversation. I was assisted by the labours of Brother Pilmoor the ensuing week; having returned from a journey in the country. He preached with more life and divine power this week than he has done since I landed at Philadelphia. Blessed be God that he is returning to that simplicity of spirit that made him so useful when he first came over to America.

Sunday, September 12.—Brother Pilmoor and I divided the labours of the day. The rainy weather made our congregations thin; but those who did attend found it good to be there.

Sunday, 26.—I preached in the morning at seven, and in the evening at the usual time. I found more liberty in the morning than I expected. After breakfast I went to St. Paul's, as I always have done, to public worship. After service was over, I retired to my room to wrestle with God in private prayer.

Thursday, 28.—We set off early in the morning, and reached Charlestown to dine, and crossed the great river Susquehannah, at the lower ferry, about four o'clock. We then set off for a Mr. Dellam's, at Swan Creek, where we met with a friendly and hearty welcome, both from him and his wife. I had not found myself so well, no, not for several months, as I found for these few days past, and especially since I left Philadelphia. We had a most pleasant journey for man and beast. If I had not crossed several large rivers before, I

should have been a good deal surprised in crossing the Susquehannah. Where we crossed, I have reason to believe it was eight times broader than the river Thames at London Bridge. Indeed, several of the rivers that I have already crossed are grand beyond conception. The river Delaware, and Hudson's river, as well as the Susquehannah, are grand sights. The large trees on the sides, and the islands in the midst, form a pleasing prospect.

Sunday, 31.—I preached this morning at eleven o'clock, where many had come from the country around. Such a season I have not seen since I came to America. From Brother Waters's I rode to Bush chapel, and preached at three o'clock. There also the Lord made bare His holy arm among the numbers who attended. From the chapel I rode to Brother Dellam's, and preached at six o'clock; and we concluded the day with prayer and praise.

Wednesday, November 3.—After breakfast we finished the rest of our temporal business, and spent some time with the local preachers and stewards. At ten o'clock our general lovefeast began. It was now that the heavens were opened, and the skies poured down divine righteousness. I had not seen such a season as this since I left my native land. Now it was that the Lord burst the cloud, which had at times rested upon my mind ever since I landed at Philadelphia. I sincerely hope that many will remember this day throughout the annals of eternity.

PHILADELPHIA, *Sunday, December* 19.—Brother Pilmoor preached morning and evening. As he and Brother Boardman are soon to depart for Great Britain, I thought it was highly proper they should preach as often as they could while they were with us.

Sunday, 26.—Brother Pilmoor preached his farewell sermon in the evening, and we concluded the day with a general lovefeast. The presence of the Holy One of Israel was in the midst, and many rejoiced in the hope of the glory of God. Next day he set off for New York, from whence Brother Boardman and he were to sail for England.

Sunday, January 30, 1774.—This day was most intensely cold indeed. I never felt the like of it in all my life. The Delaware was frozen over, so that yesterday numbers came from the Jersey shore over to Philadelphia on the ice to market. Such a strange sight I never beheld before. To see a river, a mile broad, thus frozen over, and such numbers of people passing and repassing on the ice, was quite new to me. Few, comparatively speaking, attended the word, through the violence of the cold.

NEW YORK, *Sunday, March* 6.—I was better this morning, and preached now, and in the evening. The congregations were large, and the presence of the Holy One of Israel was in the midst. I observe that the labours of my fellow labourer, Brother Shadford, have not been in vain. The spirit of love seems to increase among the people.

Monday, 23.—After preaching in the morning, I prepared for my journey to Philadelphia, in order to meet my brethren in our second little Conference. I found great freedom to speak to my fellow passengers, both in the stage and in the passage-boats. In this respect I was enabled to redeem the time, and the Lord helped me to be faithful to the souls of my fellow sinners. In these passage-boats, where there are sometimes thirty, forty, or fifty passengers, there are good opportunities of speaking a word for God. The bread that is then cast upon the waters may be seen after many days.

Wednesday, 25.—Our little Conference began; and ended on Friday, the 27th. We proceeded in all things on the same plan as in England, which our *Minutes* will declare. Everything considered, we had reason to bless God for what He had done in about ten months. Above a thousand members are added to the societies, and most of these have found peace with God. We now labour in the provinces of New York, the Jerseys, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. We spoke our minds freely one to another in love; and whatever we thought would further the work, we most cheerfully embraced it. We had now more than seventeen preachers, who were to be employed the ensuing year, and upwards of two thousand members, with calls and openings into many fresh places. We stationed the preachers as well as we could, and all seemed to be satisfied.

Thursday, September 1.—I rode to New Mills, and preached to a large number in the Baptist

meeting-house. Here, also, is the beginning of good days. On Friday I rode to Mount Holy, and preached in the Presbyterian meeting-house to an attentive congregation. I found profit and pleasure at this opportunity.

Here I met with Mr. John Brainerd, brother and successor to that great and good man, Mr. David Brainerd, missionary to the Indians. I spent an agreeable hour with him after preaching. But, alas! what an unpleasing account did he give me of the remains of his most excellent brother's labours, as well as his own, among the Indians! When his brother died, a little above twenty years ago, he succeeded him in the mission. At that time there were a large company of Indians who regularly attended the preaching of the word, and above sixty who were communicants. They were now reduced to a small number who attended his ministry, and not above ten or twelve who were proper to be admitted to the Lord's table. I asked him the reason of this declension. Some, he observed, were dead, and died happy in the Lord; others had grown careless and lukewarm; and many had wandered back among the unawakened Indians, some of whom had turned again to their heathenish customs. There were also some who had given way to the love of spirituous liquors, from which they had once been wholly delivered; so that the gold was become dim, and the most fine gold changed.

PHILADELPHIA, *Sunday, October* 2.—I preached to a large attentive congregation this evening. I

found much liberty and enlargement of soul in declaring the words of the living God. From the first of my coming here, it has always been impressed on my mind that God has a controversy with the inhabitants of the British colonies; and so I said to some in my first visit to New York. It will be seen shortly whether my fears and views were properly founded or not.

Monday, 31.—I met Brother Williams, who had come from Virginia to be present at our Quarterly Meeting. Brothers Shadford, Duke, and Webster were present also. They had come from different parts of the circuit, and our meeting together was a time of love. I preached in the evening with pleasure and satisfaction.

Tuesday, November 8.—When I arose this morning my mind was much oppressed, but I was enabled to look to Jesus. After an early breakfast we spent about two hours in the affairs of the circuits. At ten our general lovefeast began. There were such a number of whites and blacks as never had attended on such an occasion before. After we had sung and prayed, the cloud burst from my mind, and the power of the Lord descended in such an extraordinary manner as I had never seen since my landing at Philadelphia. All the preachers were so overcome with the divine presence that they could scarce address the people; but only in broken accents saying, 'This is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven!' When any of the people stood up to declare the loving-kindness of God, they were so overwhelmed with

the divine presence that they were obliged to sit down, and let silence speak His praise. Near the close of our meeting I stood up, and called upon the poor people to look towards that part of the chapel where all the blacks were. I then said, 'See the number of the black Africans who have stretched out their hands and hearts to God!' While I was addressing the people thus, it seemed as if the very house shook with the mighty power and glory of Sinai's God. Many of the people were so overcome that they were ready to faint and die under His almighty hand. For about three hours the gale of the Spirit thus continued to breathe upon the dry bones; and they did live the life of glorious love! As for myself, I scarcely knew whether I was in the body or not; and so it was with all my brethren. We did not know how to break up the meeting or part asunder. Surely the fruits of this season will remain to all eternity.

For some time past my mind has been much affected, and my spirit not a little pressed down, at the prospect of public affairs in this country. Matters look extremely gloomy; and what the end of these things will be, who can tell? This I am fully certain of, that, to all human appearance, this land will become a field of blood. My soul laments that so few seem to lay it to heart, or turn to the Hand that shakes the rod over them. Most appear to put their trust in man, and make flesh their arm; but, alas! their hearts do not cleave to the living God.

Tuesday, May 16, 1775.—The preachers came

together from their different circuits, and next day we began our little Conference. We conversed together, and concluded our business in love. Mr. Stringer spent some time with us. We wanted all the advice and light we could obtain respecting our conduct in the present critical situation of affairs.[1] We all came unanimously to this conclusion, to follow the advice that Mr. Wesley and his brother had given us, and leave the event to God. We had abundant reason to bless God for the increase of His work last year. We had above a thousand added to the different societies, and they had increased to ten circuits. Our joy in God would have been abundantly more, had it not been for the preparations of war that now rung throughout this city (Philadelphia).

Wednesday, June 7.—I spent an agreeable hour with Mr. John Brainerd, at Mount Holy. He gave me a fuller account than he had done before of the Indians under his care; and from what he said, I am more fully convinced of what I have thought before, that none can do good among those outcasts of men, comparatively speaking, but those, and those alone, who are peculiarly raised up and

[1] See Wesley's letters to Rankin, *Works*, xii., 324–330. Wesley says to his brother Charles, June 2, 1775, 'I am exceeding glad that T. Rankin does not print till his papers have passed through our correction. I was afraid he would not have been so patient.' On August 4 he writes, 'I have a good letter from T. Rankin. He, and all our brethren, expect sufferings. Hitherto they have behaved extremely well' (*Works* xii. 142–3). Wesley says: 'The conduct of T. Rankin has been suitable to the Methodist plan. I hope all of you tread in his steps.' Rankin wrote a tract for the times. Wesley says: 'You are a bold man, Tommy, to commence author in these critical times. I wish the success may answer to your expectation. There is a call for every help.'

called by God to that work. His brother, David Brainerd, was such a one; and such must all be who will be of use in the conversion of the Indians.

Thursday, 15.—I returned to Philadelphia, where I spent ten days with profit and pleasure All this week we had alarm upon alarm, by the accounts we received from New England.

Thursday, July 20.—I rode to the chapel at the forks of Gunpowder Falls, and preached to a numerous congregation. This being the day set apart for a general fast, by the Congress, throughout all the British provinces, all the serious part of the inhabitants paid a particular attention to the same. I endeavoured to open up and enforce the cause of all our misery. I told them that the sins of Great Britain and her colonies had long called aloud for vengeance; and in a peculiar manner the dreadful sin of buying and selling the souls and bodies of the poor Africans, the sons and daughters of Ham. I felt but poorly when I began to preach; but the Lord was my strength, and enabled me to speak with power, and to meet the society afterwards. After the service was over, I rode to Mr. Gough's, at Perry Hall.[1] He and his wife had, by the mercy of God, lately found a sense of the divine favour, and now cheerfully opened their house and hearts to receive the ministers and children of God. I spent a most agreeable evening with Mr. and Mrs.

[1] Both the family and the place are historically famous in American Methodist annals. At Perry Hall, 'the most elegant house in the State,' Asbury, Coke, Whatcoat, Vasey, and Black met to prepare for the celebrated 'Christmas Conference' of 1784, when the Methodist Episcopal Church was formed.

Gough, and the rest of the family. A numerous family of the servants were called in to prayer and exhortation: so that with them and the rest of the house we had a little congregation. The Lord was in the midst, and we praised Him with joyful lips. The simplicity of spirit discovered by Mr. and Mrs. Gough was truly pleasing. At every opportunity he was declaring what the Lord had done for his soul; still wondering at the matchless love of Jesus, who had plucked him as a brand from the burning. A gentleman in Bristol, who had died some years ago, left Mr. Gough an estate, in money, houses, and land, to the value of upwards of sixty or seventy thousand pounds. In the midst of all this he was miserable; nor did he ever find true felicity till he found it in the love of God his Saviour.

Monday, June 17, 1776.—I set out for Leesburgh; and after preaching at several places by the way, I came there on Friday. I called at Mr. Fairfax's (a relation of old Lord Fairfax), a gentleman of large estate, and who of late has been savingly brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was over at Baltimore at our little Conference; and at the lovefeast that followed, he spoke of what God had done for his soul, with such simplicity and unction from on high, as greatly affected every one who heard him.

Sunday, 30.—I was greatly pleased at the arrival of Brother Shadford this morning. His coming strengthened my hands in God. I preached at the chapel a little way from Brother Bursham's, at ten o'clock. I felt poorly both

in body and mind; but the Lord stood by me, and enabled me to speak with a degree of power and divine pungency. After preaching I met the society, and we found the presence of the Lord to be with us. After dinner I observed to Brother Shadford that I feared I should not have strength to preach in the afternoon. A little rest, however, refreshed me, and at four o'clock I went to the chapel again. I preached from Rev. iii. 8. Towards the close of the sermon, I found an uncommon struggle in my breast, and in the twinkling of an eye my soul was so filled with the power and love of God, that I could scarce get out my words. I scarce had spoken two sentences, while under this amazing influence, before the very house seemed to shake, and all the people were overcome with the presence of the Lord God of Israel. Such a scene my eyes saw, and ears heard, as I never was witness to before. Through the mercy and goodness of God, I had seen many glorious displays of the arm of the Lord, in the different parts of His vineyard, where His providence had called me to labour; but such a time as this I never, never beheld. Numbers were calling out aloud for mercy, and many were mightily praising God their Saviour; while others were in an agony for full redemption in the blood of Jesus. Soon, very soon, my voice was drowned amidst the pleasing sounds of prayer and praise. Husbands were inviting their wives to go to heaven with them, and parents calling upon their children to come to the Lord Jesus; and what was peculiarly affecting, I observed in

the gallery appropriated for the black people, almost the whole of them upon their knees; some for themselves, and others for their distressed companions. In short, look where we would, all was wonder and amazement. As my strength was almost gone, I desired Brother Shadford to speak a few words to them. He attempted so to do, but was so overcome with the divine presence that he was obliged to sit down; and this was the case, both with him and myself, over and over again. We could only sit still, and let the Lord do His own work. For upwards of two hours the mighty outpouring of the Spirit of God continued upon the congregation. As many of them had come from afar, we, with the greatest difficulty and the most earnest persuasions, got them to depart, between seven and eight o'clock in the evening. Some of them had to ride ten, and others sixteen, miles to their habitations. Such a day of the Son of Man my eyes never beheld before. From the best accounts we could receive afterwards, upwards of fifty were awakened and brought to the knowledge of a pardoning God that day; besides many who were enabled to witness that the blood of Jesus had cleansed them from all sin.

Tuesday, August 27.—Our Quarterly Meeting began as usual with our lovefeast, and ended with our watch-afternoon. Truly this was a day of the Son of Man, and great was our glorying in God our Saviour. In the lovefeast, the flame of divine love ran from heart to heart, and many were enabled to declare the great things which the

Lord had done for their souls. Early in the morning, some of our kind friends came and told me that they were informed a company of the militia, with their officers, intended to come and take me and the other preachers up. Some of our good women came, and with tears would have persuaded me to leave the place, and go to some other friend's house for safety. I thanked them for their love, and was obliged to them for their kind attention to my personal safety; but I added, 'I am come hither by the providence of God, and I am sent on an errand of love to the souls that shall attend; and thus engaged in my Lord's work, I fear nothing, and will abide the consequences, be they what they will.' I had retired a little by myself, when one and another came to my room-door, and begged I would not venture out to preach, for the officers and their men were come. I felt no perturbation of mind, but was perfectly calm and collected. I told our friends their business was to pray, and mine to deliver the message of God. Soon after, I went to the arbour, which was fitted up for preaching, and then I beheld the officers and soldiers in the skirts of the congregation. After singing, I called all the people to lift up their hearts to God, as the heart of one man. They did so indeed. When we arose from our knees, most of the congregation were bathed in tears; and I beheld several of the officers and their men wiping their eyes also. I had not spoken ten minutes in preaching, when a cry went through all the people, and I observed some of the officers, as well as many of the soldiers,

trembling as they stood. I concluded my sermon in peace; and the other preachers prayed and exhorted after me, till the conclusion of the service. I was informed afterwards by some of our friends that some of the officers said, 'God forbid that we should hurt one hair of the head of such a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has this day so clearly and powerfully shown us the way of salvation.' They departed to their own homes, and we spent the evening in peace and love. This afternoon, and in particular in the evening, I had a strong impulse upon and presentiment in my mind that there had been an engagement between the British and American troops. I mentioned it to one of the preachers, and added, 'We shall soon hear whether this be of God or not.'

Wednesday, we set off early on our way for Philadelphia, and reached Newcastle, on the Delaware river, on Thursday afternoon. About ten o'clock that evening an express arrived that there had been a general engagement on Long Island, near New York, and that some thousands of the American troops were cut to pieces.[1] After preaching by the way, I came in safety to Philadelphia on Saturday forenoon.

Sunday, December 1.—I preached at New Mills, to one of the most attentive, as well as the largest, congregations that I ever saw in that place. After spending a few days, I purposed returning to Philadelphia, in order to settle some

[1] In August, 1776, Lord Howe defeated Washington at Brooklyn, and cleared Long Island.

matters respecting the books; and then to return to the Jerseys again, in my way to New York, on purpose to spend some time there, as they had been without a regular preacher for some months. But herein I was disappointed, as the noise and tumult occasioned by the British Army marching through this province, and the American Army retiring before them, threw everything into confusion, and made it unsafe for me to travel. I was therefore obliged to tarry, and spend my time among the different societies in that neighbourhood. This whole month was spent in battles and skirmishes between the British troops and the Americans. It is not my intention to give a detail, or my judgement, of these matters: suffice it to say, that the business belongs to the historian.

In the beginning of June, 1778, I once more had the happiness of meeting my dear friends in London.[1] For some time I was in a new world. The happiness I enjoyed was unspeakable, and the Lord owned my poor labours with a blessing. The pleasure I experienced in seeing my brethren once more was beyond what words can describe. I was stationed for London, where I laboured for two years in concert with my valuable friend Mr. Pawson; and I trust our labours were not in vain.[2]

At the Conference in Bristol, in 1783, I requested

[1] Wesley says (*Journal*, April 23, 1778): 'I was glad to find Mr. Rankin . . . just arrived from America.'

[2] In 1779 he married Sarah Bradshaw, widow of Mr. Bradshaw, of London. He wrote an account of her life and death in the *Methodist Magazine*, 1799, p. 71.

Mr. Wesley to appoint me as a supernumerary for London. He aceded to my request. My brethren there have kindly proportioned my labours to my strength; for which I feel truly obliged to them. Should it please God that they should come to my years, I hope they will meet the same kind returns from their brethren. My only desire is to spend my few remaining days to the best of purposes. I have many mercies to praise my Lord for. I have bread to eat, and am enabled to owe no man anything but love. Thus hath my Lord graciously dealt with His unworthy creature. I earnestly desire to love Him more, and to be fully prepared for whatever His divine providence has prepared for me. I have many times, for several years past, looked forward with a gust of joy at the pleasing prospect of soon joining my dear friends who have gone before.

I thank my God for the Christian friends I now enjoy on earth; but some of my dearest and most beloved have gained the peaceful shore of eternal repose. To those happy climes I wish to bend my course with more alacrity and joy.

In this disposition Mr. Rankin continued to labour in the London Circuit till a few months previous to his departure. He generally preached once or twice every Lord's day, and occasionally on week-day evenings. He likewise met a class, attended the leaders' and preachers' meetings, and the meeting for the penitents, on Saturday evenings; at that meeting he generally prayed, and frequently exhorted.

For many weeks previous to his death, several of his friends saw that his constitution was fast breaking; but had the happiness at the same time to discern in him a more than usually growing meetness for heaven. His love of souls continuing unabated, he preached as often as he was able, and his last ministrations were more acceptable and profitable to the people even than the preceding. Peculiarities he certainly had, which sometimes prevented his being as useful as otherwise he would have been; but they were such as consisted in him with great devotedness to, and deep communion with, God.

Mr. Griffith, who knew him well and long, says, 'I always found him, after his confinement to the house, under a very blessed influence of the Holy Spirit, calmly confident towards God his heavenly Father, through the atonement, resigned to His all-wise disposal, and thankful for His benefits. At one time he said, "Here I am, in the enjoyment of many comforts, and favoured with many kind attentions, of which many of God's children are destitute. What am I, Lord, and what my father's house, that Thou shouldest show me such favours?"'

Mr. Benson wrote on Wednesday evening, May 9: 'Among many other things, he said, "I long to publish with my latest breath His love and guardian care." I said, "I doubt not but you will publish it to the last." He replied, "It is what I have prayed for, for many years." He then broke out in praise, "Oh, glory, glory for ever, glory be to God for all His goodness!

I have here a comfortable bed to lie on, kind friends about me who love me, and all the blessings I could have, together with the grace of God, and hopes of glory! I have just been desiring Mrs. Hovatt to read that hymn, "Oh, the infinite cares, and temptations, and snares," &c. Speaking of the Methodist society, he said, "I did not immediately join the people when awakened and convinced. I hesitated some time; but, glory be to God, that He inclined me to cast in my lot among them. But I had some thoughts of becoming a minister in the Church of Scotland at that time." I said "You have been much more useful among the Methodists." "Yes," replied he, "both you and I have, than we should have been anywhere else; but I have been very unfaithful to the grace of God." "We have all too great reason," I answered, "to make that confession; but when we see so many beginning in the Spirit, and ending in the flesh, we have very great cause for thankfulness that we have been kept by the power of God in the good way: and how many dangers has God brought you through by sea and land!" "Yes," said he, "I have been lashed to the pump when the waves have gone over me, endeavouring to keep the ship from sinking, and all the passengers from going to the bottom. Then I was wandering from God; but He brought me back. That," observed he, "was before I was a preacher."

'*Saturday evening, May* 12.—When I called I found he was so weak, and that so many had called upon him, that I did not go up to see him.

Finding, however, that I had been there, he sent his servant to desire that I would go back and pray with him; which I was prevented from doing.

'On Monday I called again, and found him very much weaker indeed, but perfectly resigned to the will of God, and patiently waiting till his change should come. He desired his daughter-in-law to tell me what had been determined about the service to be performed at his funeral. "Let my name," said he, "be written in the dust; but if anything can be said on the occasion of my death that may benefit the living, let it be done." "Is there any particular text," I asked, "which you would wish to be spoken from on the occasion?" After pausing a little, he said, "As a general subject, I know none more suitable than 1 Peter i. 3, *Blessed*," &c.; "but let my name be written in the dust." As he expressed a desire for more consolation, I said, "I hope you will not reason about that: leave it entirely to the Lord. He has for many years enabled you to show your faith by your works, by living to Him in whom you believe; and your state cannot now be affected by your feeling a greater or less measure of consolation. Your whole reliance must be on the word and promise of Him who will never leave those that trust in Him. The mercy, truth, and faithfulness of God in Christ, must be the ground of your confidence." He then quoted those lines, "While Jesu's blood," &c. "A most blessed hymn," said I; "and observe what follows: "Fixed on this ground," &c. At this

he seemed to be greatly comforted. "I sometimes think," said I, "we are not sufficiently thankful that the Lord has kept us so many years in the way. Since I passed over the mountains with you from Cumberland to Newcastle, in the latter end of the year 1765, how many have we known to turn aside to the right and to the left! But we have been kept, and have neither brought any dishonour upon the gospel, nor been stumbling-blocks in the way of any. And now you will soon join the wise and good collected out of all nations," &c. "Delightful consideration!" replied he. "Our chief felicity," said I, "shall be the vision and enjoyment of God; and what wonder that the holy Scriptures give us this view of future happiness? For surely the vision we shall then have of a Being infinitely amiable, and loving us infinitely, must be infinitely transporting." We then joined in prayer, and were refreshed indeed. He was affected and filled with consolation, and, when I rose from my knees, took me by the hand, and said,

"Lo, God is here, let us adore," &c.

In this humble, resigned, and happy frame of spirit he continued till, on May 17, 1810, he finished his course with joy, after having faithfully served God in his generation.' The most striking traits of Mr. Rankin's character were sincerity, steadiness, and sobriety. For upwards of fifty years, in various and trying situations, both at home and abroad, he maintained an unblemished reputation. He was truly devoted to

God his Saviour, and in death witnessed a good confession.

[Mr. Rankin seems to have entered into business about 1787. Jabez Bunting heard him preach at City Road in 1803, and speaks of a pleasant dinner party at his house, where they 'parted as merry as Christians wish to be.' He died at North Green, Shoreditch. Walter Griffith and Henry Moore spoke at his funeral, and Joseph Benson preached a memorial sermon in City Road Chapel.]

JOHN PRITCHARD[1]

I WAS born in December, 1746, at Arthbay, in the county of Meath, in Ireland. My father was a Protestant; my mother was of the Romish persuasion; and both were zealous for their religion.

My father brought up his children according to the best light he had. One evening, while I was playing with the other boys, he heard me swear. On this he took me by the hand, led me into the house, laid me on his knee, and whipped me till the blood came. From that hour to this I believe I never swore one profane oath.

While very young, I was put to school. While learning to read, I met with these words, 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' The impression they made on me never wore off, till I knew experimentally what they meant.

Whilst I was a lad I prayed earnestly night and morning. I also prayed at other times, when my mind was drawn out after God, as it very sensibly was from the age of five or six to that of fourteen. During these years I could weep and pray for hours together.

About this time I was much awakened by a horrid murder committed near Castle Pollard, in the county of Westmeath, which made a deep impression on my mind, and was a means of

[1] *Arminian Magazine*, 1785, p. 454.

stirring me up to seek the Lord with greater earnestness.

I was about fifteen when Providence led me to Longford. My father, being a builder, was employed by the lord of the place to carry on some buildings for him. It was here I first knew the Methodists, of whom I took particular notice; their going to church constantly pleased me much, being myself regular in attending all the ordinances. Yet I was often uneasy; which I strove to cure by doing something more. But afterwards, by going into loose company, I was soon led away from my former exercise of prayer and receiving the sacrament. In a while I could walk the streets at night, and run from one excess of folly to another. Yet I could find no rest. There was a bitter herb mingled with all my sweets. Nay, the concern of my mind still increased, and every method I took to satisfy it proved abortive.

About this time I was sent to the Academy for Drawing, in Dublin; and through it I got a new set of acquaintances, which gave me a disrelish to everything in the country: so that nothing would now do but a city life; and yet I was not happy.

From my earliest years I had a strong inclination to travel. I took the first opportunity, and, with some more wild than myself, I left my native soil, without acquainting father or mother, sister or brother, with my intentions, and set off for London. I was not long here before the Almighty found me out again. Being visited with a violent fever, I came to myself, and said, 'Father, I have

sinned against heaven, and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son.' I now found myself in a strange land, and among a strange people. I knew none save one man, a distant relation, who proved a friend indeed. The Lord's hand was heavy on me: my body, soul, and substance felt the weight thereof. He cut off every comfort at a stroke. He smote me with a fever, a consumption, and a guilty conscience. My sickness continued so long as not to leave me a groat in the world, and hardly a morsel to eat. For three weeks I had to live upon twopence a day, and this at a time when just risen out of a fever. I could say, in the words of Job, 'Terrors are turned upon me; they pursue my soul as the wind, and my welfare passes away as a cloud. My bones are pierced within me, and my spirit is poured out. I go mourning without the sun; a brother to the beasts of the field.' In this condition I sought unto the Lord, but had no answer. He smote me with astonishment; He scared me and terrified me with dreams, and made the night to come upon me at noon, and my sun to go down in the morning of my life; He covered me with shame, and caused me to cry out, 'A man may bear his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear? I am vile; I am oppressed; Lord, undertake for me!'

I now saw my whole heart polluted, my understanding darkened, my will corrupted, and destitute of its native freedom. I therefore made my bed in sorrow, and watered it with my tears. The multitude of sins, whereof my whole life was

full, the heinousness of them, I feared would one day be laid open before Him that is to judge the quick and dead. My confusion increased as I dwelt upon what God had done to bring me to heaven, and what I had done to oppose His gracious design. I wept to see His goodness which I had abused. The great day of trial appeared full in view; and that the rich man could not then save himself by his riches, nor the mighty man by his might, nor the crafty man by his wiles; only the just shall stand before Him with joy. The just appeared to me as sitting upon their thrones, condemning me by their holy lives; together with many of those who had committed equal sins with myself; because they knew their time of repentance, which I had despised and rejected: the just Judge pronouncing the sentence, 'Go, ye cursed'; which sentence must remain, when once passed, unalterable.

This appeared most terrible of all; and, I trust, profitable, in that it led me to the fear of the Lord.

I now appeared as one waking out of a dream in which I continued all my days. My sins stared me in the face: the consideration of my estrangement from and opposition to God was sent home on my mind; so that I was tried, cast, and condemned in my own breast. Under this sore burden and distress of mind I called upon the Lord. I also inquired after the Christians. I went to church and to the Dissenters of almost all kinds, but still found no peace. I then went to the people called Quakers, and under their

testimony I found a little consolation. At last I dropped into the old Foundery, in Moorfields, and heard a man who told me all that was in my heart.

I now, both night and morning, sat under a powerful and faithful ministry, which led me gradually through the hidden mazes of corrupt nature into grace. I found it instrumental in turning me to Christ, the true Shepherd, the Lawgiver coming out of Zion, that turns away ungodliness from Jacob. I soon found my understanding enlightened; my judgement informed how to find favour with God. But my sense of sin was so great, I could not think of finding mercy so soon; years, yea, my whole life, I thought was too little to repent and weep before I could with any face expect pardon. Thus I often rejected the counsel of God. I would not be yet healed, until I heard Mr. Jaco preach from these words, 'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.' Oh how did my heart bound! It was like the hart upon the mountain. 'My chains fell off at a stroke! my soul was free; and found redemption, Lord, in Thee!' My wilderness soul became a pleasant field, and my desert heart like the garden of the Lord; the promises flowed in upon me. I found in consequence of this great tenderness of mind, and much peace and joy through believing. I now began to taste the sweets of religion; and was enabled to pity those who were curious in their inquiries after many things but that the most needful to know. What I counted gain before, I now counted loss; for,

doubtless, I esteemed all things but as dung, in comparison of Christ and Him crucified. My daily study and contrivance was how I might manifest my love and thankfulness to Him who had called me out of darkness into His marvellous light. My every meal was a kind of sacrament: the food I ate was life to my soul, as well as marrow to my bones. I found a double sweetness in all I possessed. In private the Lord poured His blessing upon me. He washed away my tears when weeping at the throne of grace, and called me His child; enabling me comfortably to look up, and call Him Father. I read His Word daily, and wept over it. I looked into my heart (for fear a plant of unbelief should spring up), and beheld the lineaments of God's image, the transcript of His laws, the harmony of His gifts and graces, the witness, earnest, and foretaste of eternal joys.

Soon after this I met with many things to try my patience; but none of them moved me. I had my room robbed one evening while I was at the Foundery; but I could say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' I rejoiced exceedingly in that they could not rob me of Christ and the privileges of the gospel. Immediately I joined the society; and the first night of meeting the class I thought it the greatest emblem of heaven of any meeting I was ever in. My soul was much humbled under a deep sense of my great unworthiness, and of being permitted to sit and hear such as feared God relate His lovingkindness to them. I was now united to a happy people, who walked (the general

part of them) in the light of God's countenance, and counted it all joy at any time to suffer for His name's sake; where discipline was for walls and bulwarks, and where His doctrine dropped as the rain, and His words distilled as the dew. Yet I saw the need of watching and praying, that I might maintain the life and power of God in my soul. I saw that the best way to be free was to lay the axe at the root of the tree, and to spare neither root nor branch, but cut asunder all the cords which would tie the soul to earth; to deny every temper, passion, and gratification that had the least tendency to indulge the evil nature; seeking, intending, and desiring nothing during my long or short stay in this world but to find in Christ what I lost in Adam—holiness of heart and heavenly tempers, which become those who are called by grace to be children of God and heirs of glory.

When you appointed me for a class-leader, and would not excuse me from undertaking that office, I gave myself up to do all the good in my power to those you appointed to meet with me. Soon after this I got a band of single men. It increased every month, until I was forced to divide it into four bands. But being unwilling to be parted we appointed to meet together once a month, and to make it a prayer-meeting. In these meetings God was with us of a truth. We had a heaven among us, and a paradise within us! We lived as the Christians of old, having all things common; so that few, if any, counted anything that he possessed his own.

It is true we had some wildfire among us, which made Mr. John Pawson fearful of us. Mr. Allen also seemed fearful of us likewise, though he loved us much, and strengthened us both in public and private.

For between three and four years this blessed work went on among near a hundred young men, besides what were at the west end of the town; until one and another of them went into the highways and hedges to be more useful to the world.

It is with pleasure I call those days to remembrance; when we ran our circle of duty both to God and our neighbour, visiting sick-beds, hospitals, jails, workhouses, and garrets. Oh how did we then harmoniously stem the tide; swim against the stream of evil examples; and with labour and strife, self-denial and patience, fortitude and resolution, watchfulness and diligence, resist every temptation to forsake God and His ways!

Young men have the greatest opportunities for usefulness, before they get entangled in the cares of the world: if they do not, they are never likely to make any progress in the best way. This is the seed-time for usefulness. Oh that all young persons, male and female, who read these lines may bestir themselves, under a sense of the importance of this great work, to all assiduity while they are in the vigour of life!

Having spent five years thus with this happy people in London, you sent Mr. R. to inquire if I would accompany you to Ireland. After a few moments' consideration, I gladly accepted of your

offer. Accordingly, we left London the first Sunday in March, 1770. When we got over to Ireland, I went to see my relations and friends. After staying some days with my parents I overtook you at Coolalough. From this place we travelled round the kingdom, and in July arrived safe in Dublin. During this journey I found my mind enlarged towards God and man. Many desires were kindled for the furtherance of the gospel. At times I purposed to give a word of exhortation; but my heart failed me, which brought on me much distress and sore conflicts with the enemy. I then fasted, and also prayed that God would remove the burden; but to no purpose; for it grew more and more heavy upon me. The amazing value of souls weighed much with me towards putting in my mite for their salvation; especially when I considered that the everlasting God Himself came down, not to reign over princes, but to wear out His life in the form of a servant. These thoughts made me cry out, 'Lord, what is a kingdom, what is the earth, with all the planetary worlds, compared to one soul?' During this time, in which my soul hung in suspense between heaven and earth, the following lines were often brought to my mind:

> Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a present far too small;
> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all!

After travelling from March to September, I found I could not continue to travel with you in

your long and painful journeys. I therefore purposed to return to business again. On consulting you, your answer was, that I was not called to be a hewer of wood, or a drawer of water; that the Lord had something else for me to do; but for the present you would have me go to Kingswood. I accordingly went; and while I was there my heart was drawn out in prayer for the whole world. My soul grasped the habitable globe. I felt as if I could spend my life in cries and tears for Zion's welfare. During my stay here I came to a resolution to try the Lord; to put Him to it, and to see what He had for me to do in this world. I was conscious that though all Christians were not called to be public speakers, yet all are called to be a common blessing, a public good, and thereby prove themselves the children of their heavenly Father, who is good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all His works. But as I was uncertain how to act, I thought that by exercising the little ability I had I should in time know the will of God concerning me. I therefore gave myself up to do all possible good, and to extend my usefulness to all around. Accordingly, I resorted to prayer-meetings among the colliers in different parts of the wood, and exhorted the schoolboys daily; which often proved a means of quickening me in the ways of righteousness.

After some time I began to preach at Keynsham, and found much encouragement to proceed, until I fell into reasoning upon the necessity of human qualifications; such as a knowledge of the languages and episcopal ordination. But I made

this matter of prayer, and in a short time met with Mr. Baxter's *Answer to Mr. Johnston's Four Arguments* for an uninterrupted succession in the ministry, and the absolute necessity of episcopal ordination; in which answer Baxter refers his readers to the Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus for a description of the persons qualified to speak in public: which was a grateful relief to my mind.

After being at Kingswood some time, I received a letter from you, desiring me to go immediately into the Wiltshire Circuit. This threw me into a fever, and brought on me much trouble of mind; seeing I was weak in grace and in gifts, and young in years, as well as of a shy disposition. However, I ventured. But though God gave me the hearts of the people in general, and I had for my Assistant one of the best of men, Mr. Richard Bourke (now in Abraham's bosom), yet my fears and sorrows so increased that my appetite failed, my sleep departed, and my body so wasted that I became a very skeleton. Nevertheless I went on, hoping it might be better with me hereafter.

August, 1772, I was received into full connexion at Leeds, and appointed for Norwich. Here I stayed but one week, and could not think of staying any longer, from a sense of my unfitness to preach to so large a congregation. During my stay I was led to expose Antinomianism, which prevailed much here, to the great scandal of the gospel. Many of my hearers were much enraged against personal holiness, and him that preached it; and at one time in particular they ran down

the gallery-stairs like madmen, crying out, 'False doctrine! false doctrine!' I cannot say I was ever before so much inclined to speak against the popular doctrines of the day as at that time. And it since appeared there was need of it then; for some of those very persons became the most abandoned wretches in their lives afterwards.

When I came to London I knew not what to do. My mind was like a troubled sea, tossed upon every wave of temptation; not through guilt or condemnation, but on account of my not preaching against sin. At last I ventured again, in consequence of Mr. Mather's advice, and went into Sussex. Here I saw my need of wisdom; that as a servant of God I might heal divisions, and unite in one those that fear God. I was now afraid to turn my thoughts towards home, and therefore gave myself to reading, meditation, and prayer, that my profiting might appear to all.

Towards the close of this year I was much tried for myself and others, and went to the London Conference in 1773 with a heavy heart. My former resolutions were now broken, and I concluded I was not fit to stand up and speak for God. But dear Mr. Charles Perronet, knowing my trials, spoke to me in an affectionate manner, and encouraged me all he could to persevere.

After some days spent in Conference, I saw the zeal of many of the preachers who had borne the burden and heat of the day, and the desire which appeared in all to promote the Redeemer's glory. On this I saw my trials altogether unworthy of

notice. Never did the things of sense appear so inconsiderable as at present. On this the zeal of the Lord of hosts kindled afresh; and in this day of almighty power my mind was lightened of its load, and made willing to go through honour and dishonour for the sake of Christ. Fain would I have been excused aforetime from this work; but now I believed the Lord laid this burden on me, and therefore I durst not throw it off. I beheld the dear servants of my Master, who, through many dangers and labours, were still willing to spread the saving truth far and near; and strongly desired to bear a part with them; and saw myself happy that my gracious Lord assigned me a place among them.

Finding a desire to visit my native country, I no sooner asked but you granted me my request by appointing me for the Newry Circuit. Here we gathered in some hundreds from the barren mountains. In Lisburn we built a house, and added seventy souls to the society.

In 1774 I was stationed for Charlemont; where I found the Lord had blessed the labours of His servants the year before. Here also He blessed His people, and increased their number this year also.

The first half-year I met with great discouragements; the person appointed to labour with me had married a gay young lady, and consequently could not come.[1] My horse also died, and I was left alone without a man to help me, or a horse to

[1] John Whitley. See *Minutes* for 1774, also Crookshank's *Methodism in Ireland*, vol. i. p. 258.

carry me. As a great fear rested on me lest the work should be hindered through these things, I cried to God in the anguish of my spirit, and poured forth my complaints and tears to Him that called me to the work. However, I laboured to fasten every stake, and strengthen every cord; and as much as in me lay to build up the tabernacle of David wherever it was fallen; and in doing this I continued travelling on foot the greatest part of the year.

Such was the love I bore for truth that I forgot everything else in comparison of it. I longed for the Spirit to shine out upon all my ways, and sought it with great diligence: I also sought an increase of grace, well knowing this to be the most likely means of making me useful in my day and generation; and was fully determined that whatever gifts or graces God gave me, they should all be used in His service, and spent for His glory.

July, 1775, we met you in Conference at Dublin, when I was appointed for the Athlone Circuit. I was thankful to a kind Providence for giving me an opportunity of seeing and being with my first acquaintances in religion at Longford; who first showed me the way of worshipping God in the spirit. But we had no remarkable work among us this year, only that we lived in peace, and that the God of peace was with us; which we esteemed a very great blessing.

August, 1776, I was sent to Londonderry. In this circuit we had an increase. When I went to visit Coleraine, we had not one in society; but

after preaching in the streets a few evenings we joined together about sixty souls, got a room in the barracks, and continued to go there regularly from that time.

This year we lost a most valuable friend in Londonderry, namely Mr. John Smith, who was a pattern to all that believed; who for years stemmed the tide, and swam against the stream of corrupt customs and sinful examples; and who now enjoys the crown prepared for him, and sees Him whom his soul loved.

Our circuit was large, and painful to travel; having to go to Coleraine on the one hand, and to the dreary county of Donegal on the other; and round by Lough Derg to Lisleen: to which the Papists resort from all parts of Ireland, England, and sometimes from foreign countries, to expiate their sins, as they imagine.

In the depth of winter I was taken very ill at Mrs. Johnson's. Great was the love, and multiplied were the favours, I received from her. For all the time I was ill at her house she was to me as an affectionate mother and a tender nurse. Her example increased my desires for holiness, and wrought in me a greater degree of zeal to promote the interest of our Saviour wherever I came.

In this visitation I found the truth of those words, 'Blessed is the man whom God scourgeth, and teacheth out of His law.' Scourging and teaching I observed generally go together. I found it was a means of improving my grace, and an evidence that I was not a bastard, but a son. I also found that it tended to wean me from the

world, and to prepare me for a greater reward in my Father's kingdom.

July, 1777, I returned to England, after spending four years in Ireland; and three out of the four in the north; during which time my mother died, which left me more free to preach Christ wherever the Lord pointed out my way. I came to Dublin, and embarked for Liverpool, in company with Mr. John Hampson, Mr. Floyd, and others. But the high winds which are frequent in St. George's Channel, and which are fatal to many vessels in the passage from Ireland to this kingdom, were near proving so to us. For we were driven on the coast of North Wales in the night; but, by the blessing of God, with some difficulty, we landed at Beaumaris early in the morning; and about the third day we arrived safe at Bristol, which was the day before the Conference began.

During this meeting I experienced much self-abasement; being conscious of my unworthiness of the Connexion I was in. Every one there appeared as a bright light compared to me. However, I was appointed for Bristol that year. When I came to preach to such a great body of people, my soul fainted within me. But the Lord strengthened me, and gave me to see that nothing of consequence could be achieved with a faint heart, nor great matters undertaken without resolution. Accordingly, I applied myself to reading, meditation, and prayer; and found a blessing in so doing.

In August, 1778, being appointed for Northampton Circuit, I left the dear people of Bristol

with reluctance, and came to London, the place from which I first set out to travel. With tears I surveyed the interval of time since I betook myself to the highways and hedges, and changed my quiet habitation for a public one, and the silent shades for troubled seas. Since then I have not been without such difficulties as unavoidably attend us. And though I had not been wanting to count the cost, yet I have often been like the widowed dove when I thought upon the time, the place, and people among whom I drew the warmest breath after heaven. But surely the time will come when we shall for ever enjoy the company of those most dear to us.

After a few days I set off for Northampton, where I soon found the preaching of the Cross but coolly received by the inhabitants in general; where Christ is much talked of, but I fear is kept at too great a distance. There is much said of outward things, but little of the inward washing of regeneration and universal obedience. Many speak great swelling words about imputed righteousness, promising to others liberty, while they themselves are the servants of sin. I was much distressed to see the Antinomian ministers and doctrines carry the multitude after them; which made me cry, 'How long, O Lord God, holy and true, will it be ere Thou wilt come, and maintain Thy own cause?'

In the winter my horse fell ill; and I being poor (for a Methodist preacher is likely so to be as long as he lives), and the people poor also, I travelled the winter and spring quarters on foot, about

twelve hundred miles. Meantime, whatsoever I parted with on earth was amply made up to me in Christ and His people. My love to them was so great that I could willingly have died to promote their welfare. Through this love I could keep nothing as my own, but freely communicated what I had to others. And thus, through perseverance under the cross, I found the truth of those words, 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day.'

August, 1779, I went to Lynn Circuit, in Norfolk. This took in Colchester, the Fens of Cambridge, and all along the coast to Wells, Walsingham, and Fakenham; in which towns, and many of the villages, we gathered many into societies, who were careless and wicked before. But in the towns along the sea-coast we met with much trouble, especially from the smugglers. We applied to the justices, who were more afraid of them than we were; and who told us, if we would preach on Sundays, they would protect us, but not on other days.

I was much blessed with two faithful colleagues, who counted not their lives dear, so they might win souls to Christ. Yet in Lynn we did but little good; which was principally owing to some imprudent professors, by whom such as were feebly inquiring after truth were hindered from going forward in the good way, and from pressing into the kingdom of Christ.

August, 1780, I was stationed at Taunton, in Somersetshire, and went thither in much heaviness of spirit. I had for my fellow labourer James

Skinner, who travelled with me in Norfolk the year before, to the great edification of many; but his poor state of health would not admit of his continuing long in the work. Through much affliction he weathered out this year and part of the next in Nottingham; and then returned home.

I found here but little of that warm and lively affection for the gospel which I had known in other parts. Here also I was seized with an ague of a long continuance, which exercised my spirits much. I sought for submission to the rod, but found not so much of it as I could wish. However, I found a measure of the love of God, which at last enabled me to break through all difficulties.

My dear Mrs. P——, and a few others, proved kind to me. May the God whom I serve in the gospel of His Son reward them! May the angel of His presence give them victory in this life and a crown of glory in the next!

We visited some new places, and endeavoured to break up fresh ground; but to little purpose. This is one of the most fruitful counties in England for good eating and drinking; but most unfruitful as to religion. However, there are a few resolutely bold to stop the tide, and swim against the stream of evil examples. But among the few in society I knew but one that had attained the whole mind that was in Christ; namely, J—— S——, of N——, who walks worthy of his profession, and is a light in a dark place. This year, with assistance from the Conference, we paid off a debt of near two hundred pounds which was on the Taunton house.

August, 1781, from Leeds Conference, I came back again to Taunton, and had for my fellow traveller Mr. Boone. But we both were very ill of the ague, which hindered our usefulness. I used the cold bath, and took bark in abundance; I walked and rode; I tried electricity; but the most effectual remedy I could find was the cob-web-pills.[1]

August, 1782, I went to the London Conference; but was so ill I could not attend. From London, after taking a tour round Norfolk, and from thence to Bristol, I went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in hopes the north-country air would prove effectual for the recovery of my health. It did so till spring, and then I had the ague about ten weeks more. Here I found an old experienced people who have stood many storms. During my illness, which was at Alnwick, I found many friends, who spared neither cost nor pains to make me comfortable. Here I could spend my days cheerfully among a loving, tender, and affectionate people, who received my testimony with thankfulness and love.

On July 21, 1783, I was married to Hannah Day, of East Brent, in the county of Somerset; for which I hope to bless God to all eternity.

August, 1783, I was appointed for North Wilts; the first circuit I ever laboured in. We soon had a fair prospect; particularly at Allington, Castle Cary, Bradford, and Brumham, near the Devizes.

[1] Wesley recommends them in his *Primitive Physick*, adding, in the earlier editions, 'I have never known these to fail.' In later editions, however, this is changed to 'These *seldom* fail.'

In Allington we joined about forty members this year; and our good friend Mr. John Horner built us a comfortable preaching-house in Castle Cary, where but a few years ago they threw Mr. Samuel Wells[1] into a pond for preaching. At Bradford the work of God broke out by degrees, and the society increased, to which but few had been added for many years. At Trowbridge God was at work on many hearts; but in a more silent and deep manner than is common at the first. Oh what a glorious gospel is this! And how much do I owe to a kind Providence, who has called me, a sinner, to publish it! Oh what reason have I for thankfulness on this occasion! And how ought I to be humbled under a sense of His goodness to such a weak and ignorant creature! I find God increasing my desires after Himself, and exciting in my heart a warm zeal for His cause. But truly a sense of the importance of my work is sometimes more than I am able to bear.

July, 1784, I went to the Leeds Conference; but it proved to me a very sorrowful one, such as I trust I shall never see again. From this I came back to Wilts Circuit, where I am at present. The work which last year began has broken out into a glorious flame; so that, before the year is out, I expect to see some hundreds in connexion, and happy in the love of Jesus.

Having thus, sir, given you a brief account of myself, and of the great goodness of God in bringing me to Himself, and sending me out into the

[1] See above, p. 73.

highways and hedges to call sinners to repentance, and who hath thus far stood by me, I now praise His holy name, and pray that, as He has hitherto blessed us as a people, He may continue His loving-kindness towards us, and bless us more and more. I also pray that, as we believed in Him, we may ever walk in Him, and be able and willing to testify of Him to the world, and never return more unto folly.

Oh, sir, let us remember with gratitude and deep humility what God has wrought among us from the beginning! When were we hungry, and He fed us not; sick, and He came not to us? When we went out without purse or scrip, lacked we anything really necessary? When were our calamities so great that we found no consolation in Him? Can we not to this day say, Hitherto He hath helped us? Can we not read the witness, the seal, the earnest of His Spirit, and foretastes of joys to come, written on our hearts? Oh that He may remain amongst us; and that it may be our constant desire to glorify Him! which some have neglected to do. May the words of our Lord to His disciples be ever sounding in our ears: 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I overcame, and am set down on My Father's throne!' Oh may we all be like the messenger returning to the Athenians in the day of battle, who just cried, 'We are conquerors!' and then died.

JOHN PRITCHARD.

COLEFORD, *January* 17, 1785.

His obituary is in the *Minutes* for 1814:

JOHN PRITCHARD, aged seventy-one; a native of the county of Meath, in Ireland. Early in life he united himself with the Methodists, and became experimentally acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus. His conversion was sound. His knowledge of the pardoning love of God was clear and distinct. Soon after he began his Christian course, the Spirit itself bore witness with his spirit that he was a child of God; and he earnestly panted after a full conformity to the divine image. In the year 1771 he began to preach; and in the same year Mr. Wesley sent him into the Wiltshire Circuit. He continued to travel till the Conference in 1802, when, at the request of his brethren, he became governor of Kingswood School. In that situation he remained till the year 1807; when, under growing infirmities, he retired from it, and lived in Bristol until he was called to his eternal rest.

Mr. Pritchard was a warm advocate for the doctrines of the gospel as held by the Methodists. He preached with zeal and energy a free, full, and present salvation, to be obtained by faith in Christ; and towards the close of his life often expressed to his intimate friends a concern for the perpetuation of sound doctrine, genuine Christian experience, holy living, and godly discipline among the Methodists.

JASPER ROBINSON[1]

I WAS born at Wooburn Green, near High Wycombe, in December, 1727. My parents dying when I was about twelve years old, I was left to the care of a good grandmother, who kept me at school till I was fifteen years of age, at which time I went as an apprentice to London. A few years after my apprenticeship was out I went to Worcester, and wrought at the china factory about two years, and afterwards went to Liverpool. My whole life hitherto had been spent in youthful vanities and amusements, sometimes mixed with sin and iniquity of the grosser sort, which I now hate, and am ashamed to mention.

In the year 1759, being at Liverpool, I began to consider that if I went on in sin it would be my destruction, and I thought if there was a judgement to come, it would be my wisdom to prepare for it. I therefore began to break off all my known sins at a stroke, and took to fasting and prayer, and soon found the happy difference between serving God and serving the devil. In the year 1760 I removed to Leeds in Yorkshire, where I got acquainted with the people called Methodists, and joined them, attended diligently to my class, and missed no other means of grace.

[1] *Arminian Magazine*, 1790, p. 795.

In the summer of that year I heard Mr. Wesley preach, under one of whose sermons I was enabled to believe that my sins were forgiven. In the year 1763 I received a large effusion of the Holy Spirit, and seemed changed throughout the whole man. I then joined the select band, enjoyed much peace, and walked agreeable to the gospel. In 1765, after conversing with a friend, I again felt a blessed change in my heart; but, through unbelief, soon let go my hold. Some time after, at a morning preaching, it appeared as if every evil was taken out of my heart; but I soon gave way to unbelief, and became as I was before. In the year 1770 it pleased God to bless several persons at Leeds, and I received a sweet, mild, and child-like spirit; but after a while, through unbelief, my corrupt nature prevailed again.

In 1776 I set out as a travelling preacher, and was appointed for Manchester, where I preached in great weakness and fear. However, I was encouraged much from the Lord, and from many of the poorer people; but some of the rich showed great indifferency toward me. I believe I was of some use there, and in general that year was in pursuit of holiness; but though I received many marks of it, I put it off, and did not believe. In 1777 I went to Epworth Circuit. Here also holiness and usefulness were my chief aim. I received many tokens for good in my own heart, and trust I was somewhat profitable to the people. In 1778 I went to Lynn; and in 1779 to Aberdeen and Inverness. Here I was supported with an

uncommon degree of cheerfulness, and found Scotland a happy place for me, notwithstanding some inconveniences. In the latter end of the year, at Aberdeen, I was much tried, and much supported. In 1780 I came to Dundee, where I had a peaceful year, and was all for holiness. Yet I was tempted in an extraordinary manner, especially at Arbroath. I fasted and prayed night and day, but could get no rest. One day upon a mount, where I ran up to pray, a tremor seized me, and I thought the devil would become visible; but on a sudden I was sensible that Jesus was my Advocate, the Holy Spirit my Comforter, and God the Father my reconciled God. Now again I received such comfort in my mind, that nothing was wanting but faith to make me a partaker of full sanctification.

In 1781 I was appointed for Barnard Castle; and in 1782 was sent to the Isle of Man, where I minuted down, at times, the occurrences of the day, an extract from which here follows:

April 9, 1783.—I have been kept without sin in my heart this day. I grow more and more confident that God has cleansed my heart from all unrighteousness. As I was riding yesterday, a thought passed through my mind, why I was not sanctified before. And it appeared it was because I would not believe; and if I would not, then it is plain I might if I would. Is not this the case with many? Instead of simply believing, they are looking out for some extraordinary thing formed in their own imagination. This, I believe, has been the case with me for twenty years past.

Many times in the course of these years, God gave me reason to believe it: but instead of believing He had done it, I thought now I was in such a way that I could not well miss it; and, Naaman-like, I expected God would lay His hand very powerfully upon me, and manifest Himself in such an extraordinary manner, that my soul would be immediately swallowed up in a holy flame of love. But finding not what I expected, I soon flagged in my pursuit, and my vile corruption returned again to my heart. And though in general I had power over all sin, inward and outward, and peace with God, and still sought after a clean heart; yet I often thought that, according to His word, He was willing to give it to others, but had some particular exceptions against me.

I thought I strove more for it in every good word and work than many others that received it; and yet the more I strove, the harder it seemed to be attained; yea, I frequently thought the more I sought God the more He withdrew from me. Upon which, I used to fall into such weakness of mind, that I could scarce conceive anything at all of God, or of Christ. At other times, when I was earnest for purity, there would appear such a huge bar, or such a huge something, that it was impossible for me to get any farther. Then I thought I might be contented with what I had got; and, resting here, I used to enjoy a tolerable degree of peace; though envy, lust, and barrenness frequently harassed me within. But oh, how contrary to my expectation hath God dealt with me!

Two days before I received it, I was telling a brother I could not see that I had grown in grace for twenty years past; because, when I would sail forward in the divine life, there rose up always, such a sand-bank, that my poor vessel could not make any way. But as I was reading the forementioned passage, 'All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive'; I thought I would once more pray for sanctification, because it is God's will, according to His word: and I thought I would depend upon Him, as I would upon the faithfulness of a friend; and should be as much disappointed in my expectation if He were not as good as His word, as if I were deceived by a man. I soon found my soul sink down into a kind of nothingness before God, and presently was persuaded that no sin remained in my heart, and that through believing I might ever keep it out. I thought, if this is the way to be sanctified, any one that has grace may believe to be sanctified, if he will; for none can be more weak in faith than myself, and yet I have no doubt but my heart is purified.

Thus, contrary to my former expectation of being something extraordinary when sanctified, I am emptied of self, and sink into an unfeigned nothingness, that Christ may be my all in all. I can only admire the goodness of God, respecting the manner in which He has been pleased to bestow this blessing upon me. For, had He given it in my own way, that is, in rapturous joy, perhaps upon those transports subsiding, I should have immediately thought that all was gone, and

then have fallen into unbelief. But now, if I am ever so low, or ever so elevated, I continue believing in the Lord, who is my aim and end. I desire nothing, I seek nothing, but God. He is my refuge, my rest, my portion, and my all.

April 16.—I am more and more clear that my heart is entirely changed. The Word of God, the Spirit of God, and my soul's experience, agree together. This morning I was elevated in my mind; but I see it is dangerous, and that I have need to watch against it. My soul chooses Christ above ecstatic joy or transport, before everything that tends to alienate my mind from Him, yea, above all gifts without Him; for, was it possible to be in heaven without Him, I had rather be on earth with Him.

October 17.—For three days past I have been much encouraged to hope for all the fullness of God. The promise as well as command is, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart'; and I hope I shall not rest short of it. O my God, give me power now, and continue it to my life's end, for Jesus Christ's sake!

January 7, 1784.—Glory be to God in the highest! The latter part of the old year ended, as the new one begins—well. I overcome all my sin by the blood of the Lamb. For these three or four weeks past, I have walked in blessed liberty through believing. Lord, increase my faith, for there is nothing like living by faith.

April 2.—I was waked this morning with a loud voice sounding in my ears, 'Say unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.' It was repeated again very

sharply, 'Tell Zion, Thy God reigneth.' Lord, help me so to do. I have several times had such solemn views of Zion's prosperity, that I am in hopes the gospel will bear all before it in this island.

In July I left the Isle of Man, in a very prosperous way, and was appointed for Whitehaven.

In 1785 I went to Bolton Circuit, where I spent an agreeable year. Here also I made a few remarks of my experience:

Monday morning, September 2.—I waked about four o'clock with my soul breathing after God. All evil seemed removed from my mind, and I was like a morning without clouds. I had a clear view of living by faith, and of being freed from everything but God; to have Him the only portion of my soul. These words ran in my mind till my eyes gushed out with tears,

Never shall my triumphs end.

This state brings us into all calmness and serenity, and shields the mind against every temptation.

On Tuesday morning also I had a satisfying sense of faith. I see it is no matter what I am beside, in the esteem of men, whether wise or ignorant, honoured or abased; or how many my sins have been, or how encompassed about with present infirmities. If I can believe God is reconciled unto me in Jesus, all is well. I stand by faith, and not by works. I have felt a few temptations since; but I find my privilege is to look unto Jesus, and be saved.

September 10.—I hear Mr. Fletcher is dead. May I follow him as he followed Christ! He was a star of the first magnitude in God's church; but now he is gone to shine in glory, and to set no more for ever: a fixed star to all eternity. The wise shall inherit glory; and I think, if there was a wise man in the world, he was one.

November 28.—In meditating, I had a very satisfying view of the covenant of grace, in contradistinction to the covenant of works; namely, as all have sinned, the covenant of works shows no mercy. The covenant of grace is full of compassion. . . . Oh, what a pity it is, that we are so slow in believing, or looking into the glorious law of liberty and love, and continuing therein, that we may be happy! J. R.

Mr. Dermott sent Mr. Pawson this account of the old preacher's death:

HORNCASTLE, *December* 14, 1797.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WE may now add to the number of those faithful servants of the Lord, whom He hath called to their reward since the last Conference, our highly-valued friend and brother Mr. Jasper Robinson, whose happy spirit took its flight to the paradise of God the 6th instant. Never since the death of our reverend father, Mr. Wesley, have I seen so many tears shed by the survivors as at Mr. Robinson's funeral. He will live long in the esteem of many who knew his worth; and I am sure his memory must be precious to

me as long as I retain a sense of the divine goodness, of which he was a living and a dying witness. I have gone to many to learn how to live, but I went to Mr. Robinson to learn both to live and to die.

In the latter end of October he was seized, while going about his Master's business in the circuit, with the gout in his feet. He struggled forward till he came to Mr. Robinson's, at Langham Row, where he delivered his last public discourse. Here I met with my dear friend, and found him full of faith and love, as usual. He kindly inquired into the state of my mind, and spoke of the communion which he had enjoyed with God while under affliction. We had some profitable conversation respecting the divine presence with the followers of the Lord Jesus, and we spent some time together in serious solemn prayer. When we parted, he earnestly entreated me to pray that his patience might hold out to the end of his race.

He so far recovered as to be able to walk about a little, and expressed a strong desire to go home to Horncastle. Accordingly, he set forwards, and got as far as Brother Abbot's, where, on the 20th, he wrote me the following letter:

'Last Monday Mr. George Robinson came with me to this place. I got here with great ease, and was not much fatigued. I intended to proceed on my journey, but was afflicted with such a shortness of breath, that I could not sit upon my horse. Last Friday night I was almost suffocated,

so that I felt my life in danger; but in a moment it pleased God to relieve me, and I breathed very easy till morning. When I got up, my breath was much affected, and I sent for the doctor, who told me it was a spasm upon my lungs, which obstructed my breathing. His prescription gave me relief, and I slept well at night. Yesterday I was better, but at night the spasm returned. I was again relieved; but still I breathe with difficulty.

'I want, if it shall please God, to get to you; but sometimes I doubt that I shall not be able. I am not able to preach at present. My dear friend, pray for me. I am sometimes very comfortable. The Lord give me submission to His will. Brother and Sister Abbot are exceedingly kind to me. The Lord reward them for their labour of love. I cannot tell whether to subscribe myself your living or your dying brother, but I will subscribe myself

'Your affectionate brother,

'J. ROBINSON.'

On the 24th we got him home, and I found him labouring under a very great difficulty of breathing, and evidently sinking under his affliction, but perfectly resigned to the will of God, whether for life or death. Not a single murmur was ever heard from him at any time. A friend asked him how he felt when he thought himself dying at Brother Abbot's. He answered, 'I felt something of apprehension respecting the pains and feelings of nature; but I had no fear at all beyond death.'

A little while before he was taken ill, he dreamed one night that the chariot of Israel was come to convey him away, in which was the happy spirit of the late venerable Mr. Hanby, and another old preacher who is gone to glory.

He expressed himself infinitely thankful that he had only his bodily affliction to endure, and heartily praised God for all His mercies; especially for the strong confidence he had in the Redeemer, and the blessed prospect, through faith in his name, of a glorious immortality.

On Saturday, the 26th, I was obliged to leave my highly-esteemed friend, after spending a little time with him in prayer, in which his whole soul appeared to be drawn out after God. On the 28th his weakness greatly increased; but our friends rendered him every assistance in their power; for which he expressed the deepest gratitude both to God and them. Not the shadow of discontent ever made its appearance in him at any time.

December 2.—Several of our friends came in along with Brother Aikenhead. They all kneeled down around his bed, and employed some time in solemn prayer. The room seemed to be filled with the glory of God, and their hearts were as melting wax while bowed before Him. Mr. Robinson continued for some time with his hands lifted up to heaven, as if deeply engaged with the Lord in silent prayer, as had been frequently the case before. He then desired to be left alone for a little time.

I was obliged to leave him for a few days; and upon my return found him exceedingly weak, but

still able to converse a little. My wife and daughter read to him the 31st and 36th Psalms, and John xiv. He said to me, 'Who could have thought that I should have such ease of body and mind in such circumstances?' He was restless by reason of his heavy afflictions, but at the same time accounted them light, and only for a moment. He said, 'I have often thought where I shall die'; and added, 'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'

On the last day of his life he joined in prayer with great fervency of spirit. His Amens pierced our very hearts; and his soul was filled with the love of God. He said, 'I am quite clear from all distressing doubts respecting my acceptance with God. I feel as free from condemnation as if I had never sinned at all.' Indeed, throughout his affliction, he was wonderfully preserved from the power of the enemy, who was never permitted to approach him; but the Lord blessed him with the utmost tranquillity. 'The Lord,' said he, 'encompasses me about with mercies, and He makes all my bed in my sickness. I have no uneasiness respecting my soul: it is my bodily trouble only that I feel.'

Towards evening he repeated,

> I'll praise my Maker while I've breath, &c.

And looking up, he said to my daughter, 'Remember, you must die!' The next morning, December 6th, about five o'clock, his happy soul took its flight to the kingdom of glory without a sigh or groan.

His memory will long be precious to all the churches where he has laboured. He was always the Christian, and lived and died a witness of the full salvation of God. The last words he had written in his journal were, 'Thanks be to the Lord for all His mercies!' O, may I live and die like Jasper Robinson!

I am your affectionate brother,

GEORGE DERMOTT.

Mr. Pawson wrote:

I have been well acquainted with brother Robinson for near forty years. When I first knew him, he lived at Leeds. He was then a pattern of solid piety and serious godliness, and remarkably zealous for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. He was exceedingly useful as a class-leader, and likewise in visiting the sick and the poor. Very few have excelled him in these labours of love; for which reason some of his friends have always thought that he could not be more useful as a travelling preacher than he was in the discharge of those duties.

While he laboured as a local preacher in Leeds Circuit, he was much respected for his Christian simplicity, sincerity, and unaffected piety; and since he commenced itinerant preacher, his conduct has, perhaps, been as unblameable in every respect as any one who ever laboured among us. He was of a meek and quiet spirit, and remarkably humble, patient, and teachable; yet truly zealous and active. His ministerial abilities were not so great as some

others; yet upon the whole he was an acceptable preacher. I have heard him with much satisfaction publish the glad tidings of salvation, with such an holy fervour of soul, mixed with zeal, life, and power, as I always wish those to feel who speak in the name of the Lord. His whole heart was in the work; and he was in very deed a man of one business. And at all times he discovered himself to be a faithful advocate for a present, free, and full salvation. He followed after, till he attained this glorious liberty; and lived and died in the enjoyment of it.

His obituary is in the *Minutes* for 1798:

Jasper Robinson, 'an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.' He was a travelling preacher three-and-twenty years, during which his unaffected simplicity of manners, his steady and upright conduct, his mild and gentle spirit, never failed to gain him the affectionate regard of all the pious people who knew him. His whole heart was in the work of God, and many will praise the Lord for his labours. He was remarkably patient in suffering, and entirely resigned to the will of his heavenly Father. His memory will long be precious to the people among whom he laboured. He lived and died a happy witness of the full salvation of God. He fell asleep in Jesus, December 6, 1797, aged seventy-three years.

THOMAS TENNANT

LETTER TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.[1]

July 1, 1779.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I WAS born in London, in the year 1741. My father came from Norfolk, and my mother from Cambridgeshire. They were very honest and well-meaning persons, and constantly attended the service of the church; but I fear knew not the power of religion. Shortly after they came to London they saw Mr. Whitefield preaching to a great multitude in Moorfields. As they had never seen or heard of him before, they stared with great astonishment. What he said made some impression on them, and they frequently heard him, till he left England; but when he went to Georgia, they were at a loss what to do, till one told them they might hear the same kind of preaching at the Foundery. My father went, and heard you, sir; but the first time he did not understand it; but after awhile he understood you very well; and both he and my mother were truly awakened. Presently after they were admitted into the society, which they counted a very great privilege, and continued therein, serving God and His people, as long as they lived.

[1] *Arminian Magazine*, 1779, p. 469.

As to myself, I had convictions of sin from my childhood. But as I grew up, I endeavoured to get rid of them; which was partly effected; but I could not shake off the fear of death. I sometimes tried to comfort myself with the thought, that death was only my common lot among the rest of mankind; but if I apprehended it near, I was terrified beyond expression. One Sunday afternoon, when I had sauntered up and down St. James's Park, I went into Westminster Abbey, not for devotion, but to pass away time. I had not been there long before I was struck with an horrible dread! My sins were set in array against me! I hastened out of the church, but did not expect to get home alive. I seemed ready to expire, and was to my own apprehension

> Condemned the second death to feel,
> Arrested by the pains of hell!

I cried to the Lord, in an agony of fear, who heard me from His holy place, and came to my deliverance. My dread and horror were in a measure removed; and I resolved never more to spend any part of the Sabbath in merely seeking my own pleasure.

When I was about fourteen years of age, my father put me out to a person who feared God. While I was with him, I had frequent visitations from God, and felt the drawings of His blessed Spirit, though I too often resisted them. However, I became more serious; which was increased by two severe fits of illness. Before this I had been exceedingly fond of going to plays, yet never

went without a dread upon my spirit. When I was there, I always seemed as one treading on forbidden ground; and particularly one night, when two persons were trampled to death, in crowding up the same passage which I had but just before got up.

I also took great delight in reading plays; for which purpose I collected a number of the best I could meet with, and often pleased myself and my companions with the repetition of some of the most striking passages in them. But I found nothing of this kind could give me any real happiness, and was constrained to say, 'This also is vanity! It will not satisfy an immortal spirit; it will not ease a wounded mind.' At last, from a full conviction of this, I committed all my plays to the flames, and determined to spend my leisure hours in reading more profitable books. I therefore read your *Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* with much satisfaction. Yet on reading the former part of your sermon entitled 'The Almost Christian,' I was quite distressed, and ready to give up all hope. I thought, 'His Almost Christian leaves me so far behind, that to be quite a Christian seems impossible to me.' But when I had turned over the next leaf, and saw what was necessary to make a true Christian, namely, 'the love of God,' my heart was softened, and my hopes revived. I said, 'This is religion, this is Christianity indeed; and this, Lord, is the very thing I want. Oh, give me this love, and I shall be satisfied, and all within me shall bless Thy name!'

Frequently, when I have heard you preach, I thought you appeared as with a sword drawn in your hand, with which you cleft me asunder. At such times the word was indeed quick and powerful, piercing and wounding my inmost soul; it was indeed a discerner of the thoughts and intents of my heart; but it still left me without comfort to bewail my wretched condition. Thus I went on, till my burden grew too heavy to be borne. I mourned all the day long. My distress was very great, and I wanted to speak to some experienced person; but, being naturally very close and reserved, I could not break through. I was glad indeed when one asked me to go to a meeting of Christian friends; but when I came to the door, and heard them singing, I had such an idea both of their goodness, and of my own unworthiness, that I durst not presume to go in; therefore I walked back again with a heavy heart.

Some time after this I joined the society; but for a long while durst not venture to go to the Lord's table. One Sunday I was determined to go; but when I approached, my heart failed me, and I went back without receiving; but, through the distress of my mind, my legs were scarcely able to support me, and, being filled with fear, guilt, and shame, I trembled exceedingly. However, at last, as a poor, weary, heavy-laden sinner, who had nothing to plead, but, 'God be merciful to me for Christ's sake,' I ventured to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. Just before I came up to the table, these words were deeply impressed upon my mind—

Covered with Thy blood we are;
Find a part that does not arm,
And strike the sinner there.

This inspired me with such courage that I kneeled down with a strong hope I should not be a victim to God's justice, but a monument of His mercy; and when Dr. J. gave me the bread and wine, I was enabled to believe that Christ died for me, and was filled with peace in the Holy Ghost. I rose from the table with a glad heart, greatly rejoicing in God my Saviour.

After this I walked in the loving fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. I found great sweetness in the word; yea, and in all the other means of grace. Indeed, some of the most delightful moments of my whole life were spent in waiting upon God in His ordinances. I enjoyed great tranquillity of spirit, being delivered from my guilty, tormenting fears of death and hell. When I laid my body down to rest, I could repose my soul as on the bosom of Jesus, and say—

What if death my sleep invade,
Shall I be of death afraid?
Whilst encircled by Thine arm,
Death may strike, but cannot harm.

What, if beams of opening day
Shine around my breathless clay?
Brighter visions from on high
Shall regale my mental eye.

Meantime I found an earnest desire to live to the glory of God, together with much love to

precious souls. And hence I found a desire of preaching; on mentioning which, I was desired to go with a friend who occasionally exhorted a few people at a house in St. George's Fields. At his request I ventured to speak a few words to them, and found freedom of spirit.

About this time I had a great desire to travel with you, sir. When you was informed of it, you was so kind as to consent to it. So I had the pleasure of accompanying you from March, 1770, to the August following, when I was admitted on trial as a travelling preacher, and appointed for the Newcastle Circuit.

I believe very few, if any, of our preachers set out with so little courage: the depression of spirit I laboured under was nearly insupportable; and if it had not been for the affection and tenderness of my good friend Mr. Jaco, who was at that time the assistant, I must have sunk under the burden. The loving, sensible people I laboured among were also very kind to me, and bore with me; though I was with them in weakness, fear, and much trembling.

The next Conference I was sent into Lincolnshire; where I met with many trials, having both the inward and outward cross to bear. Afterwards I was near a year among the poor, loving people at Colchester; and I hope my labour was not in vain.

From thence I went to Bradford in Yorkshire, and the year following to Newcastle again. I had now a little more courage than when I was there before; and, I trust, was more useful to the

people: and from that time I have travelled with more satisfaction than ever I did before.

At present I find a thankful heart for the mercies of a gracious God, and desire to devote myself unreservedly to His service. Indeed, it is comfortable to me to reflect that 'God is love'; that 'He was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself'; that Christ Jesus 'gave Himself a ransom for all'; that 'He tasted death for every man'; that 'He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world'; and I have often wondered how any man of sense, who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, can use arguments in opposition to this. But as to the dispute concerning these points, I very seldom mention it in public; never, unless my subject naturally leads to it; and even then, I do it in as few and as calm words as possible: for I am quite convinced that a thousand exclamations and assertions, be they ever so vehemently delivered, will not amount to one argument on either side the question. But what I wish above all things is, that I may increase in the knowledge and love of God, and be more holy, happy, and useful every day of my life: nevertheless, I am truly thankful for, and profited by, the superior talents and labours of any of my brethren who are more particularly called to explain and defend these glorious truths which I have always believed.

Upon the whole, as far as I know of myself, I love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and if He is pleased to continue to use, in any degree, me, His weak, unworthy creature, I shall be

unfeignedly thankful, and hope to give Him all the praise in time and in eternity.

I am, rev. and dear sir, as ever,
Your dutiful son and servant,
THOMAS TENNANT.

His obituary is in the *Minutes* of Conference for 1793:

THOMAS TENNANT; a man of a meek and quiet spirit. He travelled for twenty-two years, and was everywhere received as an acceptable preacher.[1] His sufferings for many years were great, arising from a deep nervous disorder. As he lived to God, so he died in peace.

[1] Mrs. Marshall writes to Mrs. Christopher Hopper in 1773: 'We have had Mr. Tennant, and liked him well' (Wesley Historical Society's *Proceedings*, vol. v. p. 242).

JOHN ALLEN

LETTER TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.[1]

September, 1779.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I was born at Chapel-in-the-Frith, Derbyshire, in June, 1737. My parents were honest labouring people, and brought up eight children, all yet living; most of them convinced of sin, and some converted to God. As my father was a Churchman, and my mother a Presbyterian, I went sometimes to church, sometimes to the meeting; and frequently I went with my mother to hear the Methodists, among whom I had several relations. I stood in awe of these; and when I was in their company behaved more seriously than at other times.

From eight or ten years of age I had many serious thoughts; especially when it thundered and lightened, or when I heard a passing-bell; and I was always preserved from swearing, drunkenness, and other scandalous sins. But I delighted much in dancing, singing, and cards, and in making every one merry wherever I was.

When I was about sixteen, I was deeply convinced of sin by reading the eighth chapter of Jeremiah; particularly these words, 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not

[1] *Arminian Magazine*, 1779, p. 635.

saved.' I concluded that my day of grace was past, and that there remained for me nothing but judgement and fiery indignation. The thought of this almost broke my heart, and caused me to weep bitterly before the Lord. But after a time I grew as careless as before, and continued so for above five years, only with intervals of seriousness, and many good desires, but none brought to good effect. My great hindrance was the being joined with a society of singers. I found I could not stay with them, and be religious; so I thought I would give religion up for the present: but at times I was of all men most miserable.

Another affliction soon came upon me. I was from a child very fond of my mother, and often thought I could not bear to live after her. In March, 1759, she died. This awakened me once more. I resolved to break off at once, and to seek God with all my heart. My companions, thinking I had only left them through grief, and would soon return, said nothing to me at first; but by-and-by, when they heard I was turned Methodist, they set upon me in earnest. But by the grace of God I withstood all, and came out from among them.

At that time we had no preaching near us. I often went twelve miles on a Sunday to hear a sermon. But in September following Mr. Crab came to preach at Chinley, and joined a few together in a society: I willingly cast in my lot among them, and, blessed be God, have never repented of it. About Christmas I got Mr. John Oliver to preach at my father's house. We had

no more preaching there for some time. However, three of us continued to meet together, to sing and pray, and converse. One evening when we were met, I was in such distress that I concluded I could live no longer if God did not pardon my sins. Presently I heard a voice, saying, 'It is I: be not afraid.' I looked about to see who it was that spoke; but could see no one. However, my mind was much refreshed for a season, and I remained between hope and fear till we met again. As I was then crying to the Lord, those words came strongly to me, 'The Lord is at hand! The Lord is at hand!' But neither did the impression made by this continue long. Soon after I gave way to trifling, and so grieved the Holy Spirit that I hardly dared to look up, or hope for mercy. But while I was overwhelmed, and feebly crying out, 'I am oppressed; Lord, undertake for me,' these words were applied, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Put thy trust in God.' This comforted me much. But still I could not rest without a clear sense of my being reconciled to God. I was one day crying to God for this, and wrestling with Him in prayer, when I felt the love of God shed abroad in my heart, and was constrained to cry out,

For sinners like me
He bled on the tree.
Ah, who would not love such a Saviour as Thee?

Now I could say, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' My soul was filled with peace, and I

rejoiced in the hope of the glory of God. Soon after we began to have constant preaching; and a little class was formed, of which I was appointed the leader. I loved meeting in class; but I trembled at being the leader; nevertheless, I took up my cross. And many times it proved a blessing, both to the people and to my own soul.

Before this I had many thoughts about preaching, but I saw not how it could be, as I was deeply sensible of my own ignorance. This I often laid before the Lord, praying Him to give me full proof if it was His will. Meanwhile I sometimes gave a word of exhortation; which it pleased God to make useful. This encouraged me to speak again; but it was with fear and trembling; and I often thought, 'If I get this time over, I will speak no more.' Thus I went on for more than twelve months before I attempted to take a text. After I had exhorted and preached about four years, I was, in the year 1766, received on trial as a travelling preacher. And, although my heart was in the work, yet was I frequently tempted to give it up; but God suffered me not. He again and again refreshed my soul therein, and encouraged me to go on by letting me see the fruit of my labours.

Some years after, being stationed in London, I was seized with an illness, which held me eight months. In this affliction I was often low-spirited, which laid me open to many temptations. When I got a little better, I resolved to preach again. The first time I was to preach I went a little before the time to meditate in the

fields. As I was walking on the grass, I was, I know not how, thrown down with such force that I was much bruised, and my clothes ill torn. Hitherto could Satan go, and no farther.

Three or four years after, I had thoughts of altering my condition. Upon this I consulted my best friends. I gave myself to prayer; and, after much deliberation, married Miss Jane Westal, of which I never had cause to repent. We lived together in perfect harmony, till, on the 30th June last, she was seized with the epidemic distemper. At first we were not apprehensive it was the fever; though she herself judged it was, and believed it was the messenger of death. As her fever increased, and her end drew nearer, she was happier and happier. She said very little to me about dying, because she was sensible it would give me more affliction than I should be well able to bear. But to others she spoke freely concerning it; and with the greatest composure she said, 'I shall soon be

> Far from a world of grief and sin,
> With God eternally shut in.'

The Tuesday before her death she seemed to be quite transported with joy. When I went up stairs, I found her with heaven in her look, repeating the following lines:

> The world recedes; it disappears!
> Heaven opens on my eyes! My ears
> With sounds seraphic ring!
> Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
> O grave! where is thy victory?
> O death, where is thy sting?

On Friday she seemed like one from above. There was in her such a spirit of love and gratitude as I never saw before in any creature. She thanked and blessed every one that did the least thing for her. She often prayed that God would reward me for all my kindness to her; and broke out, 'My Lord! my God! my Father! my Husband! my Friend! I long to see Thee!' When she could speak no longer, I desired her, if her soul was happy, to lift up her hand. This she immediately did; and soon after fell asleep.

By her death I lost one of the best of wives, and my two small children one of the best of mothers. In many things she was a pattern to the flock of Christ; particularly in plainness of dress and of speech, in neatness, in every relative duty, as well as in private prayer. This I never remember her to have omitted three times a day. Had any told me beforehand how I should be able to bear her death, I could not have believed it. None but God can tell what I felt. But I did not feel a murmuring thought, nor ever for one moment imagine that God had dealt hardly with me.

I am now more convinced than ever that religion does not turn us into stocks or stones; that it is intended, not to root out, but to regulate, our passions; and that there may be the most sensible feelings, with full resignation to the will of God. This, I bless God, is my own experience. I have long been telling the people that God would give suffering grace for suffering times; and I am now a living proof of it. As I have endeavoured to water others, God hath watered me again; and

not as waters that fail, but as a fountain of water springing up within my soul.

Let the Lord now 'do with me as seemeth Him good.'

> I'll praise Him for all that is past,
> And trust Him for all that's to come.

Hitherto the Lord has been my helper; and He is the same for ever. So far as I know my own heart, I have no desire but to live to His glory, and to promote, so far as I am able, the interest of my Redeemer. My greatest grief is that I do not love God more, and that I have not more of heaven in my heart.

I bless God I have for twenty years been steady in my principles, having never, that I know of, however I was tempted, wavered for one hour. I have read many things on the other side of the question, but was not in the least shaken. I still believe that Christ gave Himself a ransom for all; and that, by the grace of God, He tasted death for every man, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

If this imperfect account may be of use to any, it will answer the end that is wished for by,

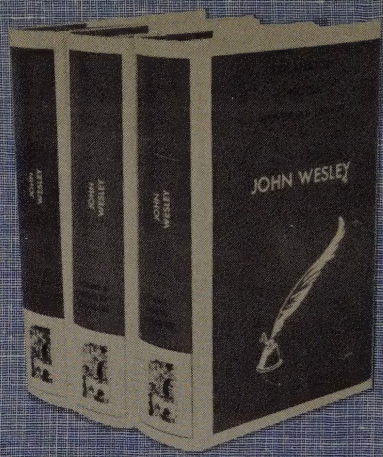
Rev. and dear sir, your son in the gospel,

JOHN ALLEN.

His obituary is in the *Minutes* for 1810:

JOHN ALLEN; a man of good report among all who knew him, and a judicious, faithful, and

affectionate preacher. He began his itinerant labours in the year 1766; and continued to travel with very great approbation and considerable success till the year 1799; when, by various infirmities, he was obliged to retire from public life, and was appointed a supernumerary in Liverpool. Here he preached occasionally that gospel which had long been the joy and delight of his heart; and, though he had often to struggle with much weakness, used cheerfully to say, 'I love my Master and His work.' Of late he was unable either to preach, write, or walk; but would not relinquish his attendance on the ordinances of God while any means could be contrived to carry him to the Lord's house. The means of grace were to the last the proper element of his soul. Meekness, gentleness, simplicity, resignation, and humility were Christian tempers which he possessed in a high degree; and one who was long and intimately acquainted with him testifies that for many years he never was observed to be ruffled with pride or anger. Ten days previous to his departure from this world, in preparing to come to the chapel, he had a fall, which occasioned much pain in his side. After this his strength rapidly declined; and on Tuesday, February 20, 1810, in the seventy-third year of his age, the weary wheels of life stood still. In the morning of that day, though unable to converse much, he was remarkably recollected; and when asked by a friend, 'Have you strong confidence in God?' he replied, 'Yes.'



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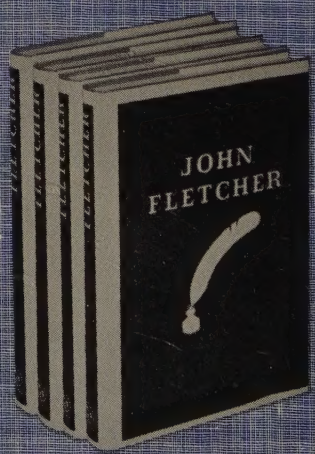

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